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LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

VOLUME ONE



MME. DE SÉVIGNÉ

by Pierre Mignard

LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO HER DAUGHTER AND HER FRIENDS

Selected, with an Introductory Essay

by RICHARD ALDINGTON

WITH AN APPENDIX OF BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION, AND AN INDEX

VOLUME I



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NOTE ON THE TEXT

This is a selection from the edition in nine volumes, printed for J. Walker, London, 1811 *(now very scarce), which was itself translated from the enlarged Paris edition of* 1806, *in* 8 *volumes.*

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INTRODUCTION

By

RICHARD ALDINGTON

I

AUTHORS of gossipy Letters, Diaries, and Memoirs, if they have any talent, are fairly certain to attract readers. The immense vogue of history in the nineteenth century has persisted, and the life of the past, whether it resembles or differs from our own, still has the power to attract curiosity. The inquiries of professional historians are now more profound, more scientific, and, to many persons, more arid than those of a former age. The "romance" of history is contemptuously declined by these specialists; the vast picturesque narrative, the panorama of an age or a nation, are abandoned, and the modern historian is concerned with the development of institutions, commerce, trade routes, political systems, religions, and the like. Mere local colour is disdained, and the personalities of the past are left to the biographer, the essayist, and the scissors-and-paster. But personalities, local colour, the endless chit-chat of the ages, back-stairs talk of the great, heroes in bedroom slippers, the love-affairs of kings and poets, the varied detail of daily life, so infinitely various and amusing, are still attractive to a wide public. A higher

standard of culture, a more extended system of education enable thousands of readers to find out and to enjoy the sources which of old were the hunting-ground of the picturesque historians and the historical novelists. The historical novel has gone out of favour, not because people have lost interest in history, but because they prefer to read the gossip of the past at first-hand.

This tendency, if it exists, is to be accepted rather than deplored, even if it may seem to result in a neglect both of scientific history and of creative literature. There is, in fact, no immutable hierarchy of literature, and readers are perfectly right to read first what interests them most, especially if they allow their interests to expand continually. In a life-time of reading for pleasure a man or woman may quite conceivably work outwards and backwards from a volume of French Memoirs to Dante and Homer in the original and the European philosophers from Aristotle to Bergson. At present, one must admit, it looks as if Cellini's Autobiography had triumphed over Tasso's poems, the Memoirs of Saint-Simon over Racine, the Letters of Horace Walpole over Hume's Essays and Berkeley's Dialogues. But then the taste for Italian Cinquecento verse, for French classic tragedy, for half-obsolete philosophy in beautiful prose, is rather rare ; while everybody is to some extent interested in human life. The historical gossip-book, such as the Letters of Mme de Sévigné, is neither pure art nor pure history, nor purely idle chit-chat, but is composed of all three. At the worst, such books offer more permanent interest and a more intellectual recreation than the ordinary commercial novel ; and a pronounced taste for them may lead either to a more serious study of history or to a more extended enjoyment of the art of

literature. A reprint of the bulk of Mme de Sévigné's letters in an early nineteenth-century translation, therefore, needs no apology.

In a doubtless praiseworthy effort to recommend the authors of their preference, critics and commentators have been led to exaggerate their value. The books which everyone must read do not fill many shelves; the books which anybody may read with pleasure and profit are ranged by furlongs in the British Museum. The Letters of Mme de Sévigné must be read by a Frenchman; but for Americans and English people they belong to the second category, and one of the duties of that minor sort of impresario who pens introductions is to try to point out why such a book is worth picking out from the huge mass of candidates for attention. But nothing is to be gained by adopting the strident methods of news journalism or by energetic attempts to "boost Mme de Sévigné's Letters to a peak quotation". Something of the kind, unluckily, has happened both in this and similar cases. One set of cheer-leaders insists on Mme de Sévigné's pre-eminence as a prose artist, and, like Gargantua weeping for his dead wife, exclaims that she was the most this and the most that ever seen in the world. A larger class adopts an attitude of fulsome patronage and adulation for her person. This is the sort of writer who speaks of the youthful Shakespeare as "litt e William", who would love to call Lamb "Charlie", and cannot refrain from the familiarity of "Marie" when relating the life of Mme de Sévigné. The commentator identifies himself wholly with his victim's interests, makes himself one of the family, defends it against all aspersions and criticisms, exults in its triumphs, mourns its griefs and failures, throws rice at every wedding,

presses forward to hold the child at every christening, and attends the funeral as a loquacious chief mourner. Mme de Sévigné has posthumously suffered from both sorts of parasite, and it is consequently rather difficult to offer a judgment of her work and personality at this date without reacting too strenuously from these atrocities or unconsciously echoing them.

II

Mme de Sévigné's life covers a large part of the reign of Louis XIII and the most brilliant epoch of Bourbon despotism under Louis XIV. The most conspicuous trait in her character is the excessive, almost doting, love for her daughter, to whom by far the larger portion and all the best of her letters were written.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal was descended from an ancient family of nobles, already conspicuous in the twelfth century. Her mother was Marie de Coulanges. Her father, Celse Bénigne de Rabutin, Baron de Chantal, was the son of the Bienheureuse Chantal, the female disciple of St François de Sales. She was born in Paris on the 5th of February, 1626. At a very early age she was left an orphan, for the Baron de Chantal was killed by the English at the siege of La Rochelle, and her mother died in 1633. She then passed to the care of her maternal grandparents, the Coulanges, and after their death became the ward of her youthful uncle, Christophe de Coulanges, Abbé de Livry. Coulanges was only twenty-nine when this responsibility was placed upon him, but he discharged his duties as guardian with scrupulous care and intelligence. The Abbé de Coulanges is often referred to in Mme de Sévigné's letters, and he continued to advise her and her family in financial matters long after his formal duties as guardian were ended. In addition to his care for her estate, the Abbé gave his niece a better education than was usually granted even to noblewomen in that age. Among her tutors were the poets Chapelain and Ménage, both excellent scholars. Ménage

was also tutor to Mme de Lafayette, and fell in love with both his pupils, who were flattered by his attentions, but made fun of him behind his back. As M. Émile Magne has recently showed, the learning acquired by Mme de Lafayette—and possibly by Mme de Sévigné as well—from this eminent scholar has been exaggerated by modern writers. But though Mme de Sévigné may not have learned much Latin, she certainly read Italian with ease, and acquired a taste for reading as well as judgment in estimating books and authors. When she married, at the age of eighteen, she must have been an extremely attractive girl. She is described by one writer in the following terms :

" We may consider Mlle Rabutin as a really pretty woman, with more expression than beauty, with features more pleasing than imposing, a neat figure inclining to be rather tall than short, with abundant fair hair, excellent health, freshness, a brilliant complexion, eyes whose vivacity added to the animation of her speech and the quickness of her movements, and a pleasant voice. She was musical according to the standards of the time, and danced admirably. The fact that the tip of her nose was square and her eyes of different colours cannot be allowed to spoil the portrait as a whole."

Coulange's careful economy had raised her fortune to the sum of 100,000 crowns, a very considerable amount in those times. The husband he chose for her was Henri, Marquis de Sévigné, a slightly impoverished nobleman of Brittany. He was related to the family of Retz, a fact which explains Mme de Sévigné's interest in the Frondeurs and in the Cardinal de Retz. There were two children of this marriage : Françoise Marguerite, afterwards Mme de Grignan, born in 1646, and Charles, afterwards Marquis de Sévigné, born in 1648.

Unfortunately, Henri de Sévigné was not a good husband, and the happiest days of Mme de Sévigné's married life were spent at their country-seat, Les Rochers, where the Marquis was sequestered from the expensive vices of Paris. It is notorious that he was unfaithful to her and that he was numbered among the lovers of Ninon de Lenclos. More than twenty years later, Mme de Sévigné's son fell in love with Ninon in his turn ; so it is not remarkable that Mme de Sévigné felt little affection for that amiable and cultivated courtesan. Perhaps it was fortunate for Mme de Sévigné that her married life did not last very long, for Sévigné was spending with reckless prodigality the money which Coulanges had so carefully collected. In 1651 an affair with Mme de Gondran involved him in a duel with the Chevalier d'Albret. Sévigné was mortally wounded, and died two days later. Mme de Sévigné was left a widow at twenty-six, with two young children, and a rather compromised fortune.

Mme de Sévigné sincerely mourned her worthless husband ; though, as Bussy said of him, in all his infidelities he had never made love to anyone so charming as his own wife. She refused all offers of marriage, and decided to give herself up to the education of her children. In this tragedy of her married life may be seen perhaps the unconscious reasons for her strange passion for Mme de Grignan. The affection which should normally have been shared between husband and children was wholly diverted to the latter ; but the son was too much like the man who had wounded her so deeply. Instinctively she could not again feel complete confidence in any man, even in her own son ; and consequently the normal preference of women for sons over daughters was in this case reversed.

And this seems both unfortunate and unfair, for the son was a much more estimable person than the daughter, whose interests were constantly preferred to his by a doting mother.

When it was known that Mme de Sévigné would not again marry, she was surrounded by a small crowd of hopeful lovers. She did not affect austerity and devout solitude, but went out in the small, brilliant society of nobles which was then "the world" in France. Her deep-seated mistrust, which had determined her decision never to marry again, as well as her genuine sense of duty and female virtue, defeated all the enterprises of these amorous gentlemen. She did not lack distinguished persons among those who pretended to her favours. One of the most pressing and the most astonished at his ill-success was her cousin, the Comte de Bussy-Rabutin, who revenged his dismissal by a very malicious "portrait" of her in his *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*. The publication of this work estranged the cousins for some years. Among the other would-be lovers were some of the greatest nobles of the Court: the Prince de Conti, Marshal Turenne, the all-powerful Minister Fouquet, the Duc de Rohan, the Marquis de Tonquedec, and the Comte de Lude. Mme de Sévigné no doubt flirted pleasantly with these great men, but not one could boast that he had touched her heart or made her his mistress. She was, however, rather seriously compromised by Fouquet. He kept her letters in a locked casket containing love-letters from many other women, and at the time of his arrest these letters were discovered and read by the King and the Chancellor, Le Tellier. On the application of Comte Bussy-Rabutin, Le Tellier declared that the letters were "the most honest affairs in the world". The most important

of Mme de Sévigné's letters to Pomponne, describing Fouquet's trial, will be found in this volume. It will be seen that she possessed the rare virtue of standing by her friends when they were unfortunate. When, years afterwards, Pomponne was dismissed from his post in the Ministry, Mme de Sévigné was among the few who remained staunchly attached to him.

In 1663, Mlle de Sévigné was presented at Court, and henceforth Mme de Sévigné's interests were centred on this much beloved but (to other people) not very amiable daughter. Mme de Sévigné lived the ordinary life of a French noblewoman of that age, dividing her time between Paris and the country, attending the Court occasionally, and meeting her friends continually for pleasure-parties and conversation. Although Mlle de Sévigné was beautiful and rich, the family did not succeed in finding her a husband immediately. Several negotiations to that end broke down, and it was not until January, 1669, that she was married. Her husband was François d'Adhémar, Comte de Grignan, a nobleman of an ancient Provençal house, who had been married twice before. The dowry amounted to 300,000 livres, and many writers have pointed out that Mme de Sévigné was unfair to her son in order to be more than generous to her daughter. M. de Grignan was governor of Languedoc and afterwards of Provence. Inevitably Mme de Grignan accompanied her husband to his province, and this separation, perhaps not wholly distasteful to the daughter, was a bitter grief to Mme de Sévigné. At the same time, the world was the gainer, for this separation, and Mme de Sévigné's passionate desire to keep in touch with her daughter were the direct cause of all the best of her letters. During these often protracted absences the mother wrote twice or

thrice a week, and the daughter duly replied. Admirable as these letters are—and it must be remembered that they partly filled the place of a newspaper or Court circular as well as being a monument of maternal affection—one cannot help supposing that M. de Grignan at least cannot have been delighted either at the expense (which was not inconsiderable) or at this maternal clutching at his wife. Mme de Sévigné interfered in their private affairs and overwhelmed her daughter and son-in-law with advice to an extent we should find intolerable. But the Grignans had every reason to endure anything from Mme de Sévigné—they were extravagant and she was rich. Mme de Grignan earned the maternal subsidy by keeping up her share of this unparalleled correspondence, by long visits to her mother and by entertaining the Marquise at Grignan.

The periods of Mme de Sévigné's life after the marriage of her daughter may be divided into sections of two kinds. The first, when she is absent from her daughter, are filled with an abundant correspondence which gives us the history of the family, the detail of Mme de Sévigné's days, and the chronicle of the Court and times. The second, when mother and daughter were re-united, either in Paris or in the country, are almost barren of letters, and in the large collected editions are bridged by letters from various people to Mme de Sévigné. In 1676 the Marquise fell ill, probably of rheumatic fever, and was nursed by her son. As she recovered slowly, she was ordered by the doctor to take the waters at Vichy ; and this new scene of the social comedy inspired some vivid and amusing letters.

Meanwhile, Charles de Sévigné had been somewhat neglected. Nothing is known of his education, and he first appears in adult

life in 1668, when he went on a military expedition to Crete against the Turks. The Marquise bought him a commission in the Gendarmes Dauphin, and her letters constantly express a modified anxiety for his fate in the wars of Louis XIV. His affairs with Ninon de Lenclos and with Racine's mistress, Mlle Champmeslé (the actress), were duly confessed to his mother, who tried to scold him but could not always resist his pleasant gaiety. He was not married until 1684, to a Breton lady, Jeanne Marguerite de Mauron. Mme de Sévigné at this time gave most of her money to her children, keeping only a small portion for herself, but, as might be expected, Mme de Grignan received far more than a fair portion. Strangely enough, Sévigné and his wife became devout, and ended their days in piety.

As the years passed, Mme de Sévigné lost her old and intimate friends one by one. La Rochefoucauld died in 1679, the Abbé de Coulanges in 1687, Mme de La Fayette and Bussy-Rabutin in 1693. In the last years of her life Mme de Sévigné was much occupied with the marriage of her two grandchildren. Pauline, whom Mme de Sévigné had brought up in childhood, was destined for the cloister in order to increase her brother's fortune. But she was fortunate enough to find a disinterested husband in the Marquis de Simiane. This young woman is the real inheritor of Mme de Sévigné's mind, and owing to a number of deaths, she afterwards remained the only representative of the Grignans and Sévignés. Her letters are often published as an appendix to those of her more famous grandmother. About the same time (1694–95) that Pauline was married, the young Marquis de Grignan was married off to the daughter of a rich but plebeian financier. Mme de

Grignan caused great offence by remarking at Court, in allusion to this marriage of nobility and wealth, that "it is sometimes necessary to manure the best lands". The young Marquis died in 1704 of smallpox, a year before his mother, who died of the same disease. Meanwhile Mme de Sévigné herself had been attacked by smallpox in 1696, and died at Grignan on the 17th of April. It is remarked that the beloved daughter was not present at the death-bed.

III

Comment has exhausted itself in praise of the Letters of Mme de Sévigné ; and yet it is a fact that many foreign readers not only find it difficult to share the admiration so widely and loudly expressed in France, but even think the letters in bulk a little tiresome. Not many English-speaking readers, it may be wagered, have followed the heroic example of the late A. B. Walkley, who took literally Sainte-Beuve's advice and read *all* the ten large volumes of letters in the *Grands Ecrivains de la France* edition. But the Letters would be far more popular and much more readily enjoyed if it were realized that they belong to a type of literature which has been eminently brilliant and fertile in France, comparatively little practised in England and not at all in America. French literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is sociable, the product of groups among the aristocracy and their *entourage*, the expression of an ideal of leisured life among wealthy and more or less cultured people. The drawing-room, whether in the Royal palaces or in noble houses, was the nursery and trial-ground of authors, and consequently much of the prose of this period is made up of Memoirs and Letters, echoes of conversation, the whispers and whims of fine society. Side by side with the great professional authors, patronizing them and learning literary lessons from them, were a host of distinguished amateurs. Now, the Letters of Mme de Sévigné are the very essence of that society, and appreciation of them depends to a great extent upon understanding and sympathizing with its habits and ideals.

The ideal of French society in the seventeenth century was the *honnête homme*, whose literary origins must be sought in the treatises of the Italian Renaissance, such as the *Cortegiano* of Baldassare Castiglione. But the French rapidly modified Italian ideas to suit their own requirements, and mingled with Italian precepts, the traditions of their own mediaeval culture and a strain of Spanish chivalry. The scope of this ideal was far-reaching : it regulated not only such practical affairs as dress, equipage, and even table-manners, but also the duel, gallantry, and all matters affecting taste and society ; it determined what drama and literature should receive polite admiration, the use of language which should be cultivated, and all the minor accomplishments of gentlemen and their ladies. How necessary all this was in the early seventeenth century in France may be realized by reading any competent work on the French nobility at the time when Henri IV ended the civil wars. The turbulence, grossness, and ignorance of even the most celebrated personages of that time make an amusing contrast with the highly-coloured pictures of the age drawn by romantic novelists and royalist doctrinaires.

Henri IV himself was little better than a rough soldier in all the delicacies of society. He was ignorant of literature and the fine arts, and his taste for coarse, obscene jesting is reflected in the poetry of his reign. He preferred sports to intellectual amusements ; his person was neglected even for that uncleanly age, and his intrigues were devoid of nicety of choice or delicacy of sentiment. Sully, his Minister, was even less favourable to the development of refined living and artistic pursuits. He inveighed against luxury, delicacy, the major and minor arts of civilization in terms such as would

satisfy the misanthropy of Rousseau or the most rigid Calvinist. With such rulers and patterns, it was hardly likely that the refined art life of Italy would flourish in France, even though Marguerite de Valois did her best to raise the standard. The brilliant Court-life of the Valois gave place to rusticity and brutality. The nobles prided themselves on their ignorance, and affected to despise all who were less ignorant than they. Michel de Marolles's father "had no letters"; the Connêtable de Montmorency could hardly read; two Marshals of France, Toiras and d'Effiat, spelled so badly that they succeeded in writing words without one of the letters which should normally compose them. The education of young nobles was largely physical and warlike; the conversation of their parents circled chiefly about the topics of war, hunting, and horses. Physical violence was common. For example, the Governor of Guyenne, M. d'Epernon, quarrelled with the Archbishop of Bordeaux about the sale of some fish: meeting the prelate one day in the street, this gentleman "punched him thrice in the stomach, twice on the mouth and nose, tore off his hat and skull-cap and cast them on the ground". At the funeral of Henri IV, the nobles established their order of precedence in Notre Dame by a free fight. The frequency of duels on the most frivolous pretexts has often been noticed by historians. It was estimated that 4,000 gentlemen were annually killed in duels; yet the King long hesitated to issue edicts against this savage custom, and all the firm and courageous despotism of Richelieu was needed to restrain it within bounds. Mercutio fades before these swashbucklers, who would fight "for the flicker of an eyelid, for a salutation merely returned, for a momentary coolness, if a man's cloak brushed theirs".

Gross eating, deep drinking, heavy gaming, violent exercise were the recreations of these nobles ; and a man who did not cheat was an exception. Their behaviour to women was often brutal : the chivalry of Bassompierre was rather the exception than the rule, and, in his case, seems to have been fostered by a visit to the Spanish Court. Even the women were distressingly vulgar and ignorant.

How this semi-barbarous society was gradually purged of its grossness, vulgarity, and ignorance until it became under Louis XIV a pattern of polite living for all the aristocracies of Europe has been described at length by M. Magendie. Innumerable influences, social, religious, literary, moral, foreign, and domestic went to the achievement of this desirable end and to the building up of a society of *honnêtes gens*. That the effort was only partially successful even at the apex of the great age, the Memoirs of Dangeau and Saint-Simon prove ; but no one can doubt that immense progress was made during the century or that this progress was to the good.

Perhaps a considerable share of the credit for creating the *honnête homme* in Bourbon France must go to Mme de Rambouillet and her salon. She was not the first or the only lady of her time to establish this disguised school for manners, but all observers are agreed that her influence was of the first importance. At the age of twenty, in spite of her youth, her beauty, and her rank, she refused to attend the Louvre. She disliked Louis XIII intensely, and would not mix in his society of huntsmen. She was passionately in love with the beauty of the world, a student of Italian and Spanish, enough of an artist to be her own architect. In forming her society she aimed not at making a centre for authors and artists, though

they were warmly welcomed, but at creating a kind of social life which united all the indefinable charms of good company. No doubt her reaction against grossness and ignorance was in some respects carried too far, so that she and her guests became liable to the reproach of preciosity and over-subtle refinement, especially in delicacies of language. But, seeing the task she had undertaken, it is obvious that some affectations and over-refinement were inevitable. In general the society collected by Mme de Rambouillet exerted a very useful influence, and its prestige became so considerable that those who were admitted to her salon were instinctively respected, admired, and copied. In satirizing *Les Précieuses Ridicules* Molière was partly jesting at provincial and out-of-date imitators of the Rambouillet salon, partly slaying an organization which had outlived most of its usefulness, and partly—it must be admitted—flattering a powerful remnant of sporting barbarity.

No one would accuse Mme de Sévigné of preciosity, but, it is a fact that she frequented the second generation of *précieuses* who were gathered under the command of Julie de Montausier. Moreover, her friend and tutor, Ménage, was one of the chief literary figures of the Rambouillet salon. Italian and Spanish, the favourite languages of the *précieuses*, were familiar to her, especially Italian. As Sainte-Beuve tells us, she read Rabelais and Saint Augustine, Montaigne and Pascal, the novel *Cléopatre* and Quintilian, Tacitus and Virgil, "in all the majesty of Latin and Italian." There are plenty of cultivated women in our time who do all this and more, but not perhaps many in the most fashionable society. While Louis XIV himself was extremely ignorant, he was wise enough to see that literature and the arts, all the charm of fine manners and polite conversa-

tion, embellish a despotism and may even console for the loss of liberty. For once in the world's history the most fashionable society and the intellectual life were in harmony ; and what is so charming about these people is their ability to enjoy all the finer things of life entirely without pedantry and without any loss of gaiety or even frivolity.

This civilized society furnished Mme de Sévigné with her friends, her point of view, her intellectual virtues, and her prejudices. In spite of her education and her serious reading, she was far from being a blue-stocking. That sense of measure which was so highly prized at the time preserved her from excesses ; and even traits which surprise and shock us, like her strange unconscious contempt for the lives of common people, were merely the accepted views of the society she represents, in general so amiably and pleasantly. For them France was a few thousand persons, mostly descended from feudal landlords and warriors. France ? No—the world ; for it was agreed that no other aristocracy could equal the "*agréemens*" of the French, no foreign monarch compare with Le Roi Soleil. These aristocrats possessed a life and almost a language of their own ; and one of their most admirable representatives is Mme de Sévigné. The exclusiveness of their life, the concentration of their interests, make her letters rather allusive, and that is one more reason why they become more enjoyable as one studies the history, the life and the literature of her age. But they form a vivid record of a brilliant, educated, fastidious, proud, gay, brave, and sociable aristocracy, a monument of "polite life" which is peculiar to France and scarcely likely to be repeated in our own times.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, ETC.

LETTER *I [1]

From Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy Rabutin

March 15, 1647.

You are a pretty fellow, truly, not to have written to me for these two months. Have you forgotten who I am, and the rank I hold in the family? I shall make you remember this, young man; and, if you irritate me, I shall reduce you to the ranks. You knew I was on the point of lying-in; and you care no more about my health than if I were still a girl. Well, I have to inform you, and you may storm at the intelligence as much as you please, that I am brought to bed of a son, who shall suck hatred to you with his milk, and that I intend to have a great many more, for the sole purpose of raising you up enemies. You have not the wit, let me tell you, to do as much: you, with your progeny of girls!

But I cannot, after all, conceal my affection; nature will get the better of policy. I had resolved to scold you for your laziness, from the beginning to the end; but I do violence to my feelings, and must return to the old subject, and tell you honestly, my dear cousin, that M. de Sévigné and I both love you very much, and often talk of the pleasure we should have in your company.

LETTER *II

From the Same to the Same

Paris, July 14, 1655.

Will you always disgrace your relations? Will you never be weary of making yourself the subject of conversation in

[1] The letters with an asterisk before the number are new letters.

every campaign? Do you imagine it can give us pleasure to hear that M. de Turenne has sent word to Court, that you have done nothing worthy of notice at Landrecy?[1] This is really very mortifying to us, and you may easily comprehend how deeply I feel the affronts you bring upon your family. But I know not why I thus amuse myself, for I have no leisure to carry on the jeſt. I muſt tell you, therefore, that I am delighted with the success which has attended your exploits. I wrote you a long letter from the country, which I fear you have not received. I should be sorry it were loſt, for you would laugh heartily at its contents.

I was yeſterday at Madame de Montglas's; she has juſt received a letter from you, as also had Madame de . . . I expected one likewise, but was disappointed. I suppose you were unwilling to effect too many wonders at once. I am not sorry, however, and shall some day claim a whole cargo for myself. Adieu, my cousin; the gazette speaks of you but slightly, which has given offence to many, and to me especially, for no one can be so much intereſted in your affairs as myself.

LETTER *III

From Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy

Paris, November 25, 1655.

You affect great things, M. le Comte: under the pretence that you write like a second Cicero, you think yourself entitled to ridicule people; the passage you remarked, in reality, made me laugh heartily; but I am aſtonished that you found no other equally ludicrous; for, in the way I wrote to you, it is a miracle that you comprehended my meaning; and I see plainly, that either you have a greater share of wit, or that my letter is better than I imagined. I am glad, however, you have profited by my advice.

[1] Mere jeſting. Bussy had merited and obtained the praises of Turenne.

I am told that you have asked leave to stay at the frontiers : as you know, my poor count, that mine is a blunt and honest sort of love, I am desirous your request may be granted : this is the road, it is said, to preferment, and you know how interested I am in your welfare ; but I shall be pleased either way. If you remain, true friendship shall find its account ; if you return, affectionate friendship shall be satisfied.

Madame de Roquelaure is returned so handsome, that she yesterday completely challenged the Louvre : this kindled such jealously in the beauties that were present that they have resolved, out of spite, she shall not be a party at any of the *after-suppers*, and you know how gay and pleasant they are. Madame de Fiennes would have retained her there yesterday, but it was understood by the Queen's answer that her presence would be dispensed with.

Adieu, my dear cousin ; believe me to be the most faithful friend you have in the world.

LETTER *IV

From Madame de Sévigné to M. de Pomponne

To-day, Monday, November the 17th, 1664, M. Fouquet was brought a second time before the Chancellor. He seated himself without ceremony upon the sellette,[1] as he had done the first time. The Chancellor began by bidding him hold up his hand ; he replied that he had already assigned the reasons which prevented him from taking the oath. The Chancellor then made a long speech to prove the legal authority of the Court, that it had been established by the King, and that the warrants had been confirmed by the Parliament.

M. Fouquet replied, that things were often done under the name of legal authority, which were found upon reflection to be unjust.

[1] Stool on which a prisoner sits.

The Chancellor interrupted him : "What ! do you mean to say that the King abuses his power ? " M. Fouquet replied : "It is you, sir, who say it, not I : this was not my idea, and, in my present situation, I cannot but wonder at your wishing to implicate me still farther with His Majesty ; but, sir, you yourself well know that we may be mistaken. When you sign a sentence, you believe it just, yet the next day you annul that sentence : thus you see it is possible to change our opinion."

"But," said the Chancellor, "though you will not acknowledge the power of the Court, you answer and put interrogations, and you are now upon the sellette."—"It is true, I am so," he replied, "but it is not voluntarily ; I am brought here against my will ; it is a power I must obey, and a mortification which God has inflicted upon me, and which I receive from His hands : after the services I have rendered, and the offices I have had the honour to bear, I might have been spared this humiliation."

The Chancellor then continued the examination respecting the pension of the gabelles, to which the replies of M. Fouquet were extremely satisfactory. The examination will proceed, and I shall send you a faithful account of it ; I am anxious to know whether my letters come safely to your hands.

Your sister, who is with our ladies at the Faubourg, has signed [1] ; she is now with the community, and seems perfectly satisfied.

Your aunt does not appear at all displeased with her ; I did not think it was she who had taken the leap, but some other person. You know, of course, of our defeat at Gigeri,[2] and as those who formed the plan wish to throw the failure upon those who executed it, they intend to bring Gadagne to trial : there are some who will be satisfied with nothing less than his head ; but the public is persuaded that he could not have advised otherwise than he did. M. d'Aleth, who excommunicated the subaltern officers of the King, who were for compelling the clergy to sign, is very much talked of here.

[1] The formulary : see the first note in the next letter.
[2] The first expedition against Algiers.

This will ruin him with your father, while it will bring him favour with Père Annat.[1]

Adieu : the desire of gossiping has seized me, but I must not yield to it : the narrative style should be concise.

LETTER *V

From the Same to the Same

Friday, November 20, 1664.

M. Fouquet was examined this morning respecting the gold mark ; he answered extremely well ; several of the judges bowed to him ; the Chancellor reproved him, and said that, as he was a Breton, it was not the custom. " It is because you are Bretons that you bow so low to M. Fouquet." In returning on foot from the arsenal, M. Fouquet asked what the workmen were doing : he was told they were making the vase of a fountain ; he went to them, and gave his opinion, and afterwards returned smiling to d'Artagnan. " You wonder, no doubt," said he, " at my interfering ; but I formerly understood these things well."—The friends of M. Fouquet, and I among the rest, are pleased at this delightful composure : others call it affectation : such is the world. Madame Fouquet, his mother, has given the Queen a plaster that has cured her convulsions, which, properly speaking, were nothing but the vapours.

Many, believing what they wish, imagine that the Queen will, on this account, intercede with His Majesty to pardon the unfortunate prisoner ; but I, who hear a great deal of the kindness of this country, do not believe a word of it. The noise the plaster has made is wonderful ; everybody says that Madame Fouquet is a saint, and has the power of working miracles.

To-day, the 21st, M. Fouquet has been questioned respecting the wax and sugar taxes. At certain objections that were

[1] A Jesuit, confessor of Louis XIV

raised, and which appeared to him ridiculous, he lost his temper. This was going a little too far, and there was a haughtiness in his manners that gave offence. He will correct himself; for this mode of proceeding is by no means advisable; but patience will sometimes escape; it seems to me as if I should have done the same.

I have been at Sainte-Marie, where I saw your aunt, who appeared to be swallowed up in devotion; she was at Mass, and in quite a religious ecstasy. Your sister was looking very pretty; fine eyes, and great animation: the poor child fainted this morning: she is very much indisposed: her aunt is uniformly kind to her. M. de Paris has given her a sort of defeasance, which gained her heart, and induced her to sign the wicked formulary.[1] I have not mentioned the subject to either of them: M. de Paris[2] had forbidden it. But I must give you an idea of prejudice: our sisters of Sainte-Marie said to me, "God be praised, Who has at length touched the heart of this poor child! She is now in the way of obedience and salvation." From thence I went to Port Royal, where I found a certain great recluse[3] of your acquaintance, who accosted me with "Well, this silly goose has signed: God, in short, has abandoned her; she is lost."—I thought I should have died with laughing, when I reflected on the different effects of prejudice: in this, you see the world in its true mirror. I think extremes should always be avoided.

Saturday evening. M. Fouquet entered the chamber this morning, and was interrogated upon the subject of grants; he was attacked weakly and defended himself ably. Between you and me, this is not the worst part of the business. Some good angel must have informed him, that he had carried himself too proudly; for he altered his manner to-day, and the judges altered theirs, by not bowing to him. The examination will

[1] This relates to the condemnation of the five propositions of Jansenius: the clergy of France protested against this, and drew up a formulary, which the nuns of Port Royal and many others refused to sign; this refusal, in the end, caused their dispersion.

[2] The then Archbishop of Paris was the sage Péréfixe.

[3] No doubt the celebrated doctor, Arnauld d'Andilly.

not be resumed till Wednesday ; and I shall not write to you till then. I have only to add, that if you continue to pity me so much for the trouble I take in writing to you, and desire me not to go on, I shall think my letters tire you, and that you do not like the fatigue of answering them ; but I promise not to write such long ones in future, and I absolve you from answering them, though I prize your letters highly. After these declarations I should think you would not attempt to interrupt the course of my gazettes. In flattering myself that I contribute a little to your pleasure, I add greatly to my own. I have so few opportunities of proving my friendship and esteem for you, that I must not neglect such as present themselves. Pray make my compliments to your family and your neighbours. The Queen is much better.

LETTER *VI

From the Same to the Same

Monday, November 24, 1664.

If I know my own heart, it is I who am the party obliged, by your receiving so kindly the information I send you. Do you think I have no pleasure in writing to you ? Believe me, I have a great deal, and am as much gratified in writing as you can be in reading what I write. The sentiments you entertain upon the subject of my letter are very natural ; hope is common to us all, without our knowing why ; but it supports the heart. I dined at Sainte-Marie de Saint-Antoine two days ago ; the lady abbess related to me the particulars of four visits she has received from Puis . . . ,[1] within the last three months, at which I am very much astonished. He came to tell her that the now blessed Bishop of Geneva (François de Sales) had been so extremely kind to him during his illness last summer, that he could not help feeling (*sic*) most strongly

[1] This name appears to be altered, and ought, as will be seen farther on, to be Pussort.

the obligations he owed him ; and he requested her to obtain the prayers of the community for the deceased. He gave her, for the accomplishment of his holy purpose, a thousand crowns, and entreated her to show him the bishop's heart. When he was at the grate, he fell upon his knees, and remained full a quarter of an hour, bathed in tears, apostrophizing this heart, and praying for a spark of the divine fire which had consumed it. The lady abbess also melted into tears ; and gave him the relics of the deceased, with which he hurried away. During these visits, he appeared so earnest about his salvation, so disgusted with the Court, so transported with the idea of his conversion, that a person more clear-sighted than the abbess would have been deceived. She contrived to introduce the subject of Fouquet ; he answered her as a man who was interested in nothing but religion ; that he was not sufficiently known ; that justice would be done him, agreeably to the will of God, if from no other consideration. I never was more surprised than at this conversation. If you ask me what I think of it, I must answer that I do not know ; that it is perfectly unintelligible to me ; that I cannot see the drift of this comedy, nor, if it is not a comedy, how the steps he has since taken are to be reconciled with his fine speeches.

Time must explain all this, for it is at present perfectly enigmatical. Do not mention it, for the lady abbess desired me not to make the circumstance known.

I have seen M. Fouquet's mother. She told me she had sent the plaster to the Queen by Madame de Charost.[1] The effect was certainly wonderful : in less than an hour the Queen felt her head relieved, and so great a discharge of offensive matter took place that had it remained it might have suffocated her in the next fit. The Queen said aloud that it was this matter which had occasioned the convulsions of the preceding night, and that Madame de Fouquet had cured her. The Queen Mother thought the same, and said so to the King, who did not attend to her. The physicians, who had not been consulted in applying the plaster, withheld their sentiments on the subject, but made their Court at the expense of truth. The same day

[1] Fouquet's daughter.

these poor women threw themselves at the foot of the King, who took no notice of them. Everybody is acquainted with the circumstance of the cure; but no one knows what will come of it: we must wait the event with patience.

M. Fouquet was interrogated again this morning, but the Chancellor's manner was changed; it seems as if he were ashamed of receiving his lesson every day from Boucherat.[1] He told the reporter to read the article upon which he wished to examine the accused; and the reading lasted so long that it was half-past ten o'clock before it was finished. He then said, "Let Fouquet be brought in"; but corrected himself immediately, by saying "M. Fouquet"; as, however, he had not directed the prisoner to be sent for, he was still at the Bastille. A messenger was then dispatched for him, and he arrived at eleven o'clock. He was questioned respecting the grants, and answered extremely well; but he was a little at a loss as to certain dates, which would have injured him considerably, if the examiner had been skilful and awake; but, instead of this, the Chancellor was asleep. This was observed by M. Fouquet, who would have laughed heartily, if he had dared. At length the Chancellor roused himself, and continued the examination; and though M. Fouquet rested too much on a prop that might have failed him, the event proved that he knew what he was about; for, in his misfortune, he has certain little advantages that belong exclusively to himself. If they go on so slowly every day, the trial will last a long time.

I shall write to you every evening; but I shall not send my letter till Saturday or Sunday evening: it will give you an account of the proceedings of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and I will contrive that you shall receive one on Thursday, informing you of the proceedings of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday: in this way your letter will not be long detained. I beg my compliments to your recluse, and to your better half. I say nothing of your dear neighbour; it will soon be my turn to give you news of her myself.

[1] Boucherat, then master of requests, and afterwards Chancellor, had been appointed to put the seals on the papers of the Superintendent. He was on the Commission charged with the prosecution.

LETTER *VII

To the Same

Thursday, November 27, 1664.

The examination upon the subject of the grants was resumed to-day. The Chancellor kindly endeavoured to drive M. Fouquet to extremities, and to embarrass him, but he did not succeed. M. Fouquet acquitted himself admirably: he did not come into the chamber of justice till eleven o'clock, because the Chancellor made the reporter read as before; but in spite of this parade of justice, he said the worst he could of our poor friend. The reporter [1] always took his part, because the Chancellor evidently leaned to the other side of the question. At last, he said, "Here is a charge to which the accused will not be able to answer."—"And here, sir," said the reporter, "is a plaster that will cure the weakness"; he made an excellent justification of him, and then added: "In the place in which I stand, sir, I shall always speak the truth, in whatever form it presents itself to me."

This allusion to a plaster called forth a smile from the audience, as it reminded them of the one that has lately made so much noise at Court. The accused was then brought in; he only remained an hour in Court; and, on his leaving it, M. d'Ormesson was complimented by several persons upon his firmness.

I must relate to you what I myself did. Some ladies proposed to me to accompany them to a house exactly opposite the arsenal, where we could see the return of our poor friend. I was masked,[2] but my eye caught him the moment he was in view. M. d'Artagnan was at his side, and fifty mousquetaires about thirty or forty steps behind him. He appeared thoughtful. The moment I saw him, my legs trembled, and my heart beat

[1] The reporter was M. d'Ormesson, one of the most respectable magistrates of his time.

[2] It was still the custom for ladies to wear masks when they went abroad; a custom which is retained in Corneille's plays, and which was brought from Italy by the Medicis, with many other customs equally disagreeable. These masks of black velvet, to which the *loups* succeeded, were intended as a preservative to the complexion.

so violently that I could scarcely support myself. In approaching us to re-enter his dungeon, M. d'Artagnan pointed out to him that we were there, and he saluted us with the same delightful smile you have so often witnessed. I do not believe he recognized me, but, I own, I was strangely affected when I saw him enter the little door. If you knew the misfortune of having a heart like mine, I am sure you would pity me ; but from what I know of you, I do not think you have much the advantage of me in this point. I have been to see your dear neighbour. I pity you as much at losing her as I rejoice at her being with us. We have had a good deal of conversation upon the subject of our poor friend ; she has seen Sappho,[1] who has considerably raised her spirits. I shall go there to-morrow to recruit my own, for I often feel the want of consolation ; it is not that I do not hear a thousand things that should inspire hope, but, alas ! my imagination is so lively that everything which is uncertain destroys me.

Friday, November 28.

The Court opened early this morning. The Chancellor said he had now to speak of the four loans : d'Ormesson observed that it was a very unimportant affair, and one upon which no blame could be attached to M. Fouquet, as he had declared from the beginning. An attempt was made to contradict him : he begged leave to explain the matter according to his own view of it, and desired his colleagues to listen to him. The Court was attentive, and he convinced them that it was a very trifling business. The accused was then ordered to be brought in ; it was eleven o'clock. You will remark that he has never been more than an hour upon the sellette. The Chancellor still wished to speak of the loans. M. Fouquet requested he might be allowed to state what he had omitted the day before, respecting the grants ; leave was given him, and he said wonders. The Chancellor asked him, " Have you had your acquittance for the employment of this sum ? " He replied that he had, but that it was conjointly with other things, which

[1] Mademoiselle Scudéry, sister of the author, known under this name by an unfortunate fertility of imagination : a woman who had more wit than her writings display, though they display a great deal.

he had marked, and which will come in their course. "But," said the Chancellor, "at the time you received these acquittances you had not incurred the expenses?"—"True," replied M. Fouquet, "but the sums were set apart for the purpose."—"This is not enough," said the Chancellor.—"Pardon me, sir," said M. Fouquet, "when I gave you your appointments, for instance, I sometimes received the acquittance a month beforehand, and as the sum was set apart, it was exactly the same as if it had been paid."—"That is true," said the Chancellor "I was much indebted to you."—M. Fouquet replied that he had no intention to reproach him, and that he was at that time happy to serve him; but the circumstance had occurred to his mind, as an instance in point, and he could not help making use of it.

The Court has closed till Monday. They seem determined to prolong the affair as much as possible. Puis . . . has promised to give the accused as few opportunities of speaking as he can. The fact is, they are afraid of him. They would therefore interrogate him summarily, and even pass over some of the articles; but he is determined they shall not do this, nor will he suffer them to judge his cause without his being permitted to justify himself upon every separate head of accusation. Puis . . . is in continual apprehension of offending Petit.[1] He excused himself the other day by saying that M. Fouquet had certainly spoken too long, but that he had no means of interrupting him. Ch . . . is constantly behind the screen, whenever the examinations take place: he hears all that is said, and offers to go to the judges and explain the reasons by which he is led to draw such opposite conclusions. All this is irregular, and shows a great inveteracy against the unfortunate

[1] Petit is a feigned name, meant either for Le Tellier or Colbert. With regard to Puis . . . , as, from the sense of the expressions, he must be one of the judges against Fouquet, there is little doubt that Pussort is the person alluded to; and what is said of him in the preceding Letters must be so understood.

It may be further remarked that the conduct of Colbert and Le Tellier, in this business was extremely well characterized by a criticism of the great Turenne, who interested himself warmly for Fouquet. To someone who blamed the violence of Colbert, and praised the moderation of Le Tellier, Turenne replied, "True, sir; M. Colbert has most desire that he should be hanged, and M. Le Tellier most fear lest he should not be."

prisoner. I own I have no longer any hope. Adieu, sir, till Monday. I wish you could see my heart; you would then be convinced of the sincerity of a friendship which you profess to prize.

LETTER *VIII

To the Same

Thursday, December 4, 1664.

At length the examinations are over. M. Fouquet entered the chamber this morning. The Chancellor ordered his *project against the State* to be read throughout. M. Fouquet spoke first upon the subject. "I believe, sir," said he, "you can derive nothing from this paper but the effect it has just produced, of overwhelming me with confusion." The Chancellor replied, "You have yourself heard and seen by it, that your regard for the State, which you have so much insisted upon in Court, was not so considerable, but that you would have embroiled it, from one end to the other."—"Sir," replied M. Fouquet, "this idea occurred to me only in the height of the despair in which the Cardinal often placed me; especially when, after contributing more than any man in the world to his return to France, I found myself repaid by the basest ingratitude. I had a letter from himself, and one from the Queen Mother, in proof of what I say; but they have been taken away with my papers, as have several letters. It is to be lamented that I did not burn this unfortunate paper, which had so completely escaped from my mind and my memory that I have been nearly two years without thinking of it, or knowing even that it existed. However this affair may terminate, I disown it with my whole heart, and I entreat you, sir, to believe that my regard for the person and service of the King has never been in the slightest degree diminished."—"It is very difficult to believe this," said the Chancellor, "when we see such contrary sentiments expressed at a different period."—M. Fouquet replied: "At no period, sir, even though at the hazard of my life, have I ever abandoned the King's person; and,

at the time in question you, sir, were at the head of the council of his enemies, and your relations gave free passage to the army against him."

The Chancellor felt this stroke; but our poor friend was irritated, and therefore not quite master of himself. The subject of his expenses was afterwards introduced. "I undertake," said he, "to prove that I have not incurred a single expense which, either by means of my private income, with which the Cardinal was well acquainted, or my appointments, or my wife's fortune, I was not able to afford; and if I do not prove this satisfactorily, I consent to be treated with the utmost ignominy."—In short, this interrogation lasted two hours; M. Fouquet defended himself ably, but with a degree of warmth and petulance; the reading of the project having ruffled him exceedingly.

When he had left the Court, the Chancellor said, "This is the last time we shall interrogate him." M. Poncet then went up to the Chancellor, and said, "You have made no mention, sir, of the proofs there are that he had attempted to put his project against the State into execution."—The Chancellor replied, "They are not, sir, sufficiently strong; he would have refuted them too easily."—Upon which Sainte Hélène and Pussort said, "Every one is not of that opinion."—This is a subject to muse upon. The rest to-morrow.

Friday, December 5.

This morning the subject of the requests was mentioned, which are of little importance except that there are persons, not ill disposed, who wish the sentence to refer to them. The business on the side of the prosecution is at an end. It is now M. d'Ormesson's turn to speak; he is to recapitulate the several matters. This will occupy the whole of the next week, during which the time we shall pass can scarcely be called living. For myself, you would hardly know me, and I do not think I can hold out so long. M. d'Ormesson has desired me not to see him again till the business is over: he is in the conclave, and will have intercourse with no one. He affects

great reserve ; he listens to me, but does not answer. I had the pleasure in bidding him adieu, to acquaint him with my sentiments. I will inform you of all I hear. God grant my last tidings may be good : I desire it fervently. I assure you we are all very much to be pitied. I mean you and I, and all who, like ourselves, are interested in the event. Adieu, my dear sir : I am so dull this evening, and my heart is so much oppressed, that I must conclude.

LETTER *IX

To the Same

Friday, December 19, 1664.

This is a day which gives us great hopes ; but I must go back in my story. I told you that M. Pussort had on Wednesday voted for the death of our friend ; on Thursday, Noqués, Gisaucourt, Feriol, and Péraut, voted in the same way. Roquesante concluded the day, and, after speaking well for an hour, sided with M. d'Ormesson. This morning our hopes have sailed before the wind ; for several votes that were doubtful have been given ; Toison, Masnau, Verdier, La Baume, and Catinet, and all in favour of M. d'Ormesson's opinion. It was then Poncet's turn to speak ; but thinking that those who remained were almost all disposed to be lenient, he would not begin, though it was only eleven o'clock. It is thought, he wishes to consult with someone what he shall say, and that he is not willing to bring disgrace upon himself, and consign a man to death unnecessarily. Such is our present situation, and though so favourable a one, our joy is not complete ; for you must know, that M. N. is so enraged, that we expect some unjust and atrocious proceeding in consequence, that will plunge us again into despair. But for this, my dear sir, we should have the satisfaction of seeing our friend, though unfortunate, yet safe, as far as his life is concerned, which is a great thing. We shall see what will happen

to-morrow. We are now seven to six. Le Feron, Moussy, Brillac, Bénard, Renard, Voisin, Pontchartrain, and the Chancellor, have not yet voted ; but of these, we shall have by far the greater number.

Saturday.

Fall on your knees, sir, and return thanks to God ; the life of our poor friend is saved. Thirteen were of M. d'Ormesson's opinion, and nine of Sainte-Hélène's. I am almost wild with joy.[1]

Sunday Evening.

I was so sadly afraid some other person would have the pleasure of communicating to you the joyful tidings.

My courier was not very diligent ; he said, on setting out, that he would sleep nowhere but at Livri ; he assures me, however, he was the first that arrived. Heavens ! how gratifying must the intelligence have been to you ! how inconceivably sweet are the moments that relieve the heart on a sudden from the anguish of so painful a suspense ! It will be a long time before I shall lose the joy I received yesterday ; it was, in reality, too great, too much almost for me to bear. The poor man learned the news by signals, a few moments after judgment was pronounced, and I dare say felt it in all its extent. This morning the King sent the Chevalier du Guet to the mother and wife of M. Fouquet, recommending them both to go to Montluçon in Auvergne, the Marquis and Marchioness de Charost to Ancenis, and the young Fouquet to Joinville in Champagne. The good old lady sent word to the King, that she was seventy-two years of age ; that she besought His Majesty not to deprive her of her only remaining son, the support of her life, which apparently was drawing near its close. The prisoner does not yet know his sentence. It is said he will be taken to-morrow to Pignerol,

[1] Names of the Committee who judged Fouquet :—
Favourable : D'Ormesson, Le Feron, Moussy, Brillac, Renard, Bénard, Roquesante, La Toison, La Baume, Verdier, Masnau, Catinet, Pontchartrain.
Adverse : St. Hélène, Pussort, Gisaucourt, Feriol, Noqués, Péraut, Poncet, the Chancellor, Pierre Seguier.

for the King has changed his banishment into imprisonment. His wife, contrary to all rule, is not permitted to see him.

But let not this proceeding abate the leaſt particle of your joy; mine, if possible, is increased; for I see in this more clearly the greatness of our victory. I shall faithfully relate to you the sequel of this curious history. I have given you what has passed to-day; the reſt to-morrow.

Tuesday Evening.

This morning, at ten o'clock, M. Fouquet was conducted to the chapel of the Baſtille. Foucault held the sentence in his hand. "You muſt tell me your name, sir," said he, "that I may know whom I address." M. Fouquet replied, "You know very well who I am; and as for my name, I will not give it here, as I refused to give it at the chamber of juſtice; by the same rule also, I proteſt againſt the sentence you are going to read to me." What passed being written down, Foucault put on his hat, and read the sentence; M. Fouquet heard it uncovered. Pecquet and Lavalée [1] were afterwards separated from him, and the cries and tears of these poor men melted every heart that was not of iron; they made so ſtrange a noise, that M. d'Artagnan was obliged to go and comfort them; for it seemed to them, as if a sentence of death had juſt been read to their maſter. They were both lodged in the Baſtille, and it is not known what will be done with them.

M. Fouquet went to the apartment of M. d'Artagnan: while he was there, he saw M. d'Ormesson, who came for some papers that were in the hands of M. d'Artagnan, pass by the window. On perceiving him, M. Fouquet saluted him with an open countenance, expressive of joy and gratitude: he even cried out to him, that he was his very humble servant. M. d'Ormesson returned the salutation with very great civility, and came with grief of heart to tell me what had passed.

At eleven o'clock a coach was ready, into which M. Fouquet entered, with four guards. M. d'Artagnan was on horseback with fifty musketeers; he will escort him to Pignerol, where he will leave him in prison, in the care of a man of the

[1] His physician and his servant.

name of St. Marc, who is a very honeſt fellow : he will have fifty soldiers to guard his prisoner. I do not know whether another servant has been allowed our friend ; you can form no idea how cruel the circumſtance of taking Pecquet and Lavalée from him appears to everyone : some even go so far as to draw dreadful inferences from it. May God preserve him, as he has hitherto done : in Him we muſt put our truſt, and leave our friend to the protection of that Providence which has been so gracious to him. They ſtill refuse him his wife, but have permitted the mother to remain at Parc, with the abbess her daughter. L'Ecuyer will follow his ſiſter-in-law : he has declared that he has no other means of subsiſtence. M. and Madame de Charoſt are going immediately to Ancenis. M. Bailly, the Attorney-General, has been turned out of office, for having said to Gisaucourt, before judgment was pronounced, that he ought to retrieve the honour of the Grand Council, which would be disgraced if C..., Poncet, and himself acted together in the business. I am sorry for this upon your account : it is a rigorous measure. *Tantane animis cœleſtibus ira* ? [1]

But no, it does not mount so high as that. Such harsh and low revenge cannot proceed from a heart like that of our Monarch. His name is employed, and, as you see, profaned. I will let you know the reſt : how much better we could converse upon these things ! it is impossible to communicate by letter all we have to say. Adieu, my dear sir, I have not so much modeſty as you, and, without taking refuge in the crowd, I assure you I love and eſteem you highly.—I have seen the comet ; its train is of a beautiful length. I partly found my hopes on it. A thousand compliments to your dear wife.

Tuesday.

I send you something to amuse you for a few minutes. You will certainly find it worth reading. It is charity to entertain you both in your solitude. If the friendship I bear the father and the son were a remedy againſt dullness, it is an

[1] Virgil's *Æneid*, lib. i.

evil of which you would never have to complain. I am just come from a place where, it seems, I have renewed this sentiment, by talking of you with five or six persons, male and female, who, like me, rank themselves among your friends ; it was at the Hôtel de Nevers. Your wife was of the party ; she will tell you of the delightful little comedians we met there. I believe our dear friend has arrived, but I have had no certain intelligence. It is only known, that M. d'Artagnan, continuing his obliging manners, gave him the necessary fur clothing, that he might pass the mountains without inconvenience. I know also that M. d'Artagnan has received letters from the King, and that he told M. Fouquet to keep up his spirits and his courage, and that everything would go well. We are always looking forward to some mitigation, and I in particular : hope has been too kind for me to abandon it. Whenever I see the King at our ballets, these two lines of Tasso come into my head :

> Goffredo ascolta, e in rigida sembianza
> Porge piu di timor che di speranza.[1]
>
> *Gerusalemme Liberata, cant.* 5.

But I take care not to despond : we must follow the example of our poor prisoner ; he is tranquil and gay ; let us be so too. It will give me real pleasure to see you here. I cannot think your exile will be of long duration. Assure your good father of my affection ; I cannot help expressing myself thus ; and let me know your opinion of the stanzas. Some of them are admired, as well as some of the couplets.

LETTER *X

To the Count de Bussy

Paris, July 26, 1668.

I begin by thanking you, my dear cousin, for your letters to the King : they would afford me pleasure even if they

[1] Godfrey attends, and with a brow severe
But little gives to hope, and much to fear.
Hoole's translation.

were written by a stranger: they have awakened in me sentiments of pity, and I should think they must produce the same effect on our Sovereign. It is true, he does not bear the name of Rabutin, as I do.

The prettiest girl in France sends her compliments to you. This title is due to her; I am, however, weary of doing the honours of it. She is more worthy than ever of your esteem and friendship.

You do not know, I believe, that my son is gone to Candia with M. de Rohan, and the Count de Saint-Paul. He consulted M. de Turenne, Cardinal de Retz, and M. de la Rochefoucauld upon this: most important personages! and they all approved it so highly, that it was fixed upon, and rumoured abroad, before I knew anything of the matter. In short, he is gone. I have wept bitterly, for it is a source of great grief to me. I shall not have a moment's rest during his voyage. I see all its dangers, and terrify myself to death: but, alas! I am wholly out of the question; for, in things of this nature, mothers have no voice. Adieu.

LETTER *XI

From Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy

Paris, December 4, 1668.

Have you not received the letter, sir, in which I gave you life, disdaining to kill you at my feet? I expected an answer to this noble action; but you have thought it unworthy of your notice: you have contented yourself with rising from the ground and taking your sword, as I commanded you. I hope you will never again employ it against me.

I must tell you a piece of news, that will, I am sure, give you pleasure. It is, that the prettiest girl in France is going to be married, not to the handsomest youth, but to one of the worthiest men in the kingdom, to M. de Grignan, whom you

have long known. All his wives died to give place to your cousin, and, through extraordinary kindness, even his father and mother died too ; so that knowing him to be richer than ever, and finding him besides, by birth, situation, and good qualities, everything we could wish, we have not trafficked with him, as is customary, on the occasion, but confided in the two families that have gone before us. He seems very well pleased with the alliance, and, as soon as we have heard from his uncle the Archbishop of Arles, his other uncle, the Archbishop of Uzès being on the spot, the business will be finished ; probably before the end of the year. As I am a lover of decorum, I could not fail asking your advice and approbation. The public seems pleased : this is a great deal ; for we are such fools as to be almost always governed by its opinion.

LETTER *XII

Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Grignan [1]

Paris, Wednesday, June 23, 1670.

You have written me the most charming letter in the world. I should have answered it much sooner, had I not known that you were traversing your province. I should likewise have sent you the music you desired, but have not yet been able to procure it : in the meantime let me tell you that I love you most affectionately, and if that is capable of giving you the satisfaction you assure me it does, you ought to be the most contented man in the world. You must certainly be so in the correspondence you carry on with my daughter ; it appears to me very animated on her part, and I do not think anyone can love another more than she does you. I hope to return her to you safe and sound, with a little one the same,

[1] Monsieur de Grignan had been some time in Provence, whither he had been obliged to repair on the King's service ; and Madame de Grignan remained at Paris on account of her being with child.

or I will burn my books. I am not very skilful indeed myself; but I can ask advice, and follow it, and my daughter on her side takes all possible care of herself.

I have a thousand compliments to send you from M. de la Rochefoucauld [1] and his son; [2] they have received all your letters. Madame de la Fayette [3] returns you many thanks for your remembrance of her, as do my aunt [4] and the Abbé,[5] who is very fond of your wife; this I assure you is no small matter, for if she were not extremely prudent, he would show his dislike without the least reserve.

If an opportunity should offer of being serviceable to a gentleman of your country, whose name is . . . , I beg you would embrace it; you cannot give me a more agreeable proof of your friendship. You promised me a canonship for his brother; you know all his family. The poor youth was particularly attached to Monsieur Fouquet; [6] he was convicted of having conveyed a letter to Madame Fouquet, from her husband, for which he was condemned for five years to the galleys, a very extraordinary punishment: you know he is one of the best creatures living, and as fit for the galleys as to fly in the air.

Brancas [7] expresses himself satisfied with you, and does not intend to spare you when he shall have occasion for your services. He thinks you can never acquit yourself of the obligation you are under to him for giving you so charming a wife, and one who loves you so tenderly. Adieu, my dear Count; I embrace you with all the affection of my heart.

[1] Francis, Duke de la Rochefoucauld, author of the *Maxims*.

[2] The Prince de Marsillac.

[3] Marie Magdeleine de la Vergne, Countess de la Fayette.

[4] Henriette de Coulanges, Marchioness de la Trousse, sister to Marie de Coulanges, the mother of Madame de Sévigné.

[5] Christopher de Coulanges, Abbot (or Abbé) of Livri; uncle to Madame de Sévigné.

[6] Nicholas Fouquet, Superintendent of the Finances, who was banished from Court by the artifice and intrigues of M. Colbert.

[7] Charles Count de Brancas, gentleman of honour to Queen Anne of Austria, who was remarkable for his great absence of mind.



ROGER DE BUSSY-RABUTIN

Engraved by Edelinck, after Le Febvre

LETTER *XIII

From Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy

Paris, July 6, 1670.

I haſten to write to you, in order to efface from your mind as speedily as possible the vexation which my laſt letter occasioned you. I had no sooner written it, than I repented having done so. M. de Corbinelli would have prevented my sending it ; but I was not willing it should be loſt, naughty as it was ; and I thought I should not lose you by it, as you did not lose me when your offence was ſtill greater. We cannot deſtroy kindred : our chains ſtretch a little sometimes, but they never break. I know this by experience, and was therefore willing to risk my packet. It is true, I was in an ill-humour. My spirit was high, and I could not make it bend. I dipped my pen in gall, and it composed a foolish bitter letter, for which I beg a thousand pardons. If you had entered my room an hour afterwards, I should have joined with you in laughing at my folly. Now then we are friends : you would be fortunate if we were quits ; but, on this score, how much more do I owe you than I shall ever repay ! M. de Corbinelli will tell you how I am ; notwithſtanding my grey hairs, he will revive perhaps your old partiality for me. He loves me truly, and I swear I love nobody more than I love him. His mind, his heart, his sentiments, please me in the higheſt degree. This blessing I owe to you : but for you I should not have been acquainted with him. You will soon see him : you will have pleasure in conversing with him. He will inform you of the death of Madame,[1] and

[1] Henrietta, daughter of Charles I, King of England, and granddaughter of Henry the Great, a Princess dear to France by her underſtanding and her charms, who died in the prime of life. Thus Voltaire expresses himself. He believed her death natural, contrary to the opinion of all his contemporaries, contrary even to the prejudice this Princess herself evinced on her death-bed : we are led to believe that, in this inſtance, as in many others, he displayed his superior knowledge as well as superior judgment.

that with her have died all the gaiety, charms, and pleasures of the Court. Adieu, Count ; no animosity : let us quarrel and plague each other no more. I have been a little to blame, but who, in this world, is perfect ? I am glad I have appeased you, on my daughter's account. Ask M. Corbinelli how handsome she is. Show him my letter, and he will see, that if I inflict wounds, I heal them.

LETTER XIV

From Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Grignan

Paris, Wednesday, August 6, 1670.

Is it not true, that I have given you the prettiest wife in the world ? and can anyone be more prudent, more regular in her conduct ? Can anyone love you more, have more Christian sentiments, long more ardently to be with you, or attend more strictly to the duties of her station ? It is ridiculous enough to say all this of my own daughter ; but I admire her as other people do, and perhaps more, as I am more an eyewitness of her behaviour ; and to own the truth to you, whatever good opinion I had of her as to the principal points, I never thought she would have been so exact as she is in all the minuter ones. I assure you, everybody does her justice, and she loses none of the praises which are so much her due.

It is an old maxim of mine, and what may perhaps one day or other pull an old house about my ears, that the public is neither foolish or unjust : Madame de Grignan has too much reason to be contented with it, to dispute that point with me at present. She has been under inconceivable distress about your health. I heartily rejoice at your recovery, as well for the love I bear to you, as the affection I have for her. I beg, if you expect any more attacks from your disorder, that you will prevail on it to stay, at least, till your wife is brought to bed. She is every day making complaints of being detained here ; and declares with a very serious face, that it was great cruelty to separate her from you. It looks as if we had taken pleasure in sending you two hundred leagues

from her. I desire you will in your next endeavour to make her easy on this head, and let her know the pleasure you have in the thoughts of her lying-in so agreeably where she is. It was absolutely impossible for her to have accompanied you in the condition she was in ; and nothing can be better for her health, and indeed for her reputation, than to lie-in where the best assistance is to be had, and to remain in a place where her conduct has been so very much admired. If, after all this, she will become a giddy creature and a fool, it will be a twelve-month, at least, before it will be credited ; so good an opinion has everybody of her prudence. I call all the Grignans that are here to witness the truth of what I say. I have not a little joy in it, upon your account ; for I love you most sincerely, and am charmed to find that the event has so completely justified your choice. I shall tell you no news ; that would be infringing my daughter's rights ; I only beg you to be assured that no one can be more affectionately interested in everything that concerns you.

LETTER XV

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, November 19, 1670.

Madame de Puisieux [1] says, that if you have such a fancy for a son, you should have taken the pains to get one : I must own, I think what she says is very just and reasonable. You left a little girl in our hands, and a little girl we return you. Never was labour so favourable ! You must know that my daughter and I went last Saturday to take a walk in the Arsenal : she felt some slight pains : when we came home I was for sending for Madame Robinette, but she would by no means agree to it. We supped, and everything was well. She ate pretty heartily. The coadjutor [2] and I were for giving her chamber a little the air of a lying-in woman's, but she opposed

[1] Charlotte d'Estampes Valançai, Marchioness de Puisieux.
[2] Jean Baptist, Adhémar de Monteil, coadjutor of Arles, brother to M. de Grignan.

it, and so firmly, that we thought her indisposition but a passing fit of the colic. At last, as I was going to send for Robinette, the pains came on stronger, and continued in such a manner ! her cries were so violent, so piercing ! that we presently found she was in labour. But the worst of it was there was no midwife. We none of us knew what we did ; for my part, I was perfectly wild. My daughter cried out for assistance, and for the midwife, and not without reason, poor girl ; for we sent in all haste for the one that laid Deville, and she had not been in the room a quarter of an hour before the event took place. And just at that instant Pecquet came in, who assisted to lay her. When all was over Robinette arrived, and was quite surprised ; for she had been employed in setting everything in order about the duchess, thinking she had that night good at least. Helen [1] at first whispered me, " Madam, it is a boy." I told this to the coadjuter ; but when we came to examine a little nearer into matters, behold it was a girl ! We were a little disconcerted, and ashamed of ourselves, when we came to reflect that we had been all the summer making *des beguins au Saint Père*,[2] as la Fontaine says, and that after all our hopes, *La Signora met au monde une fille.* I assure you this has lowered our crests a little, and nothing comforts us but my daughter's being so perfectly well. She has had no milk-fever. The child has been christened by the name of Marie-Blanche ; [3] the coadjuter standing for Monsieur d'Arles,[4] and I for myself. Here is a detail now that would be very tiresome, if it were about indifferent things, but we are fond of hearing every little circumstance that relates to those we love. The premier president of Provence [5] came hither from St. Germain purposely to make his compliments on the occasion. I never saw truer marks of friendship. But what have I yet to tell you ? Dare I do it ?

[1] One of Madame de Sévigné's women.

[2] See his *Conte de L'Hermite*.

[3] The same who was afterwards a nun in the Convent of St. Marie d'Aix, and died there at the age of 62.

[4] François Adhémar de Monteil, Archbishop of Arles, Usher of the King's Orders, uncle to M. de Grignan.

[5] Monsieur de Forbin d'Oppede.

I flatter myself that the knowledge of your dear wife being so perfectly well, will in some measure comfort you ; but our amiable Duchess de Saint Simon [1] lies so dangerously ill of the smallpox, that her life is despaired of. Adieu, my dear friend ; I leave your poor heart to make something out of all these different sentiments. You know mine with regard to yourself long since. Malicious folks will have it, that Blanche d'Adhémar is not likely to be the greatest beauty in the world ; and the same people add, that she very much resembles you. If that be the case, you will hardly doubt of my loving her dearly.

LETTER XVI

To the Same

Paris, Friday, November 28, 1670.

Let us hear no more, I beseech you, of this wife of yours ; we love her beyond all bounds of reason. She is very well, and I now write to you wholly on my account. I want to talk to you about Monsieur de Marseille,[2] to beg you, by all the confidence you have in me, to follow my advice in your conduct respecting him. I know the manners of the Provençals, and the pleasure they take in fomenting divisions, insomuch that if we are not continually upon our guard against the discourse of these gentry, we are insensibly led away by their sentiments, which are often very false and unjust. I can assure you that time, or other reasons, have made a great alteration in Monsieur de Marseille's temper ; for some days he has been extremely mild ; and, provided you do not treat him as an enemy, you will not find him one. Let us take him at his word, till we discover that he does something to contradict it ; nothing is so capable of overturning a good

[1] Diana Henrietta de Budos, Duchess of St. Simon.

[2] Toussaint de Forbin Janson, Bishop of Marseilles, afterwards Bishop and Count of Beauvais, Cardinal, and Grand Almoner of France.

intention as to show a distrust of it; to be suspected for an enemy, is often sufficient to make a person become one: everything is then at an end, and there are no longer any measures to keep. Whereas confidence prompts to good actions; we are agreeably affected with the good opinion of others, and cannot readily bring ourselves to forfeit it. In God's name, open your heart, and you will perhaps be surprised by a behaviour that you at present little expect. I never can think this man conceals any rancour in his heart, under so many professions of friendship as he has made us, and of which we had better be the dupes, than entertain false or injurious suspicions. Follow my advice; it is not mine only; several very able heads recommend this conduct to you, and give you assurances that you will not be deceived. Your family is persuaded of it. We see better into these things than you; so many persons who love you, and have just pretensions to good sense and discernment, can scarcely be mistaken.

I wrote you the other day, that the premier President of Provence had come purposely, on hearing of your wife's being brought to bed, to make her his compliments. Nothing can be more obliging, or show a greater interest in your concerns. We have seen him again to-day, and he spoke to us in the most frank and kind manner possible, about the affair you have proposed to the Assembly (of the States of Provence). He told us that you had orders sent you to call them together, and that he had written to you, to communicate his advice on the occasion; advice which we all thought very good. As we can only know men at first by their words, we should always believe them till they contradict their words by their actions: we find sometimes that those we have taken for enemies are not so; and we are then heartily ashamed of having been mistaken. It is sufficient to be ready to hate where we have reason for hatred. Adieu, my dear Count, I have truth on my side, which makes me so importunate.

Madame de Coulanges [1] writes me word that you love me: though this is no news to me, yet I ought to be pleased that

[1] Madame de Coulanges was at that time at Lyons.

your friendship for me can resist absence and the claims of Provence, and is so ready to show itself on all occasions.

I heartily thank you for your kindness to . . . I have received a great many handsome compliments on the occasion. The King has had compassion on him ; he is no longer in the galleys, but enjoys his liberty, and lives comfortably in Marseilles. We cannot too much applaud His Majesty for this act of goodness and justice.

LETTER XVII

To M. de Coulanges

Paris, Monday, December 15, 1670.

I am going to tell you a thing the most astonishing, the most surprising, the most marvellous, the most miraculous, the most magnificent, the most confounding, the most unheard of, the most singular, the most extraordinary, the most incredible, the most unforeseen, the greatest, the least, the rarest, the most common, the most public, the most private till to-day, the most brilliant, the most enviable ; in short, a thing of which there is but one example in past ages, and that not an exact one neither ; a thing that we cannot believe at Paris ; how then will it gain credit at Lyons ? a thing which makes everybody cry, " Lord, have mercy upon us ! " a thing which causes the greatest joy to Madame de Rohan and Madame de Hauterive ; a thing, in fine, which is to happen on Sunday next, when those who are present will doubt the evidence of their senses ; a thing which, though it is to be done on Sunday, yet perhaps will not be finished on Monday. I cannot bring myself to tell it you : guess what it is. I give you three times to do it in. What, not a word to throw at a dog ? Well then, I find I must tell you. Monsieur de Lauzun [1] is to be

[1] Antoninus Nompar de Caumont, Marquis de Puiguilhem, afterwards Duke de Lauzun.

married next Sunday at the Louvre, to ——, pray guess to whom ! I give you four times to do it in, I give you six, I give you a hundred. Says Madame de Coulanges, " It is really very hard to guess : perhaps it is Madame de la Vallière." Indeed, Madam, it is not. " It is Mademoiselle de Retz, then." No, nor she neither ; you are extremely provincial. " Lord, bless me," say you, " what stupid wretches we are ! it is Mademoiselle de Colbert all the while." Nay, now you are still farther from the mark. " Why then it must certainly be Mademoiselle de Créqui." You have it not yet. Well, I find I must tell you at last. He is to be married next Sunday, at the Louvre, with the King's leave, to Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle de —Mademoiselle—guess, pray guess her name : he is to be married to Mademoiselle, the great Mademoiselle ; Mademoiselle, daughter to the late Monsieur [1] ; Mademoiselle, granddaughter of Henry the Fourth ; Mademoiselle d'Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle d'Orléans, Mademoiselle, the King's cousin-german, Mademoiselle, destined to the Throne, Mademoiselle, the only match in France that was worthy of Monsieur. What glorious matter for talk ! If you should burst forth like a bedlamite, say we have told you a lie, that it is false, that we are making a jest of you, and that a pretty jest it is without wit or invention ; in short, if you abuse us, we shall think you quite in the right ; for we have done just the same things ourselves. Farewell, you will find by the letters you receive this post, whether we tell you truth or not.

LETTER XVIII

From the Same to the Same

Paris, Friday, December 19, 1670.

What is called falling from the clouds, happened last night at the Tuileries ; but I must go farther back. You have

[1] Gaston of France, Duke of Orleans, brother to Louis XIII.

already shared in the joy, the transport, the ecstasies, of the princess and her happy lover. It was just as I told you, the affair was made public on Monday. Tuesday was passed in talking, astonishment, and compliments. Wednesday Mademoiselle made a deed of gift to Monsieur de Lauzun, investing him with certain titles, names, and dignities, necessary to be inserted in the marriage-contract, which was drawn up that day. She gave him then, till she could give him something better, four duchies ; the first was that of Count d'Eu, which entitles him to rank as first peer of France ; the dukedom of Montpensier, which title he bore all that day ; the dukedom de Saint Fargeau ; and the dukedom de Châtellerault : the whole valued at twenty-two millions of livres. The contract was then drawn up, and he took the name of Montpensier. Thursday morning, which was yesterday, Mademoiselle was in expectation of the King's signing the contract, as he had said he would do ; but, about seven o'clock in the evening, the Queen, Monsieur, and several old dotards that were about him, had so persuaded his Majesty that his reputation would suffer in this affair, that, sending for Mademoiselle and Monsieur de Lauzun, he announced to them, before the Prince, that he forbade them to think any farther of this marriage. Monsieur de Lauzun received the prohibition with all the respect, submission, firmness, and, at the same time, despair, that could be expected in so great a reverse of fortune. As for Mademoiselle, she gave a loose to her feelings, and burst into tears, cries, lamentations, and the most violent expressions of grief ; she keeps to her bed all day long, and takes nothing within her lips but a little broth. What a fine dream is here ! what a glorious subject for a tragedy, or romance, but especially talking and reasoning eternally ! This is what we do day and night, morning and evening, without end, and without intermission ; we hope you do the same, *E fra tanto vi bacio le mani* : "and with this I kiss your hand."

LETTER XIX

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, December 31, 1670.

I have received your answers to my letters. I can easily conceive the astonishment you were in at what passed between the 15th and 20th of this month ; the subject called for it all. I admire likewise your penetration and judgment, in imagining so great a matter could never support itself from Monday to Sunday. Modesty prevents my launching out in your praise on this head, because I said and thought exactly as you did. I told my daughter on Monday, "This will never go on as it should do till Sunday ; I will wager, notwithstanding this wedding seems to be sure, that it will never come to a conclusion." In effect the sky was overcast on Thursday morning, and about ten o'clock, as I told you, the cloud burst. That very day I went about nine in the morning to pay my respects to Mademoiselle, having been informed that she was to go out of town to be married, and that the coadjuter of Rheims [1] was to perform the ceremony. These were the resolves on Wednesday night, but matters had been determined otherwise at the Louvre ever since Tuesday. Mademoiselle was writing ; she made me place myself on my knees at her bedside ; she told me to whom she was writing, and upon what subject, and also of the fine presents she had made the night before, and the titles she had conferred ; and as there was no match in any of the courts of Europe for her, she was resolved, she said, to provide for herself. She related to me, word for word, a conversation she had had with the King, and appeared overcome with joy, to think how happy she should make a man of merit. She mentioned, with a great deal of tenderness, the worth and gratitude of M. de Lauzun. To all which I made her this answer : "Upon my word, Mademoiselle, Your Highness seems quite happy ! but why was not this affair finished at

[1] Charles Maurice le Tellier.

once last Monday? Do not you perceive that the delay will give time and opportunity to the whole kingdom to talk, and that it is absolutely tempting God, and the King, to protract an affair of so extraordinary a nature as this is to so distant a period?" She allowed that I was in the right, but was so sure of success, that what I said made little or no impression on her at the time. She repeated the many amiable qualities of Monsieur de Lauzun, and the noble house he was descended from. To which I replied in these lines of Corneille's *Polyeucte*:

> Du moins on ne la peut blâmer d'un mauvais choix,
> Polyeucte a du nom, et sort du sang des rois.
>
> Her choice of him no one can surely blame,
> Who springs from kings, and boasts a noble name.

Upon which she embraced me tenderly. Our conversation lasted above an hour. It is impossible to repeat all that passed between us, but I may without vanity say, that my company was agreeable to her, for her heart was so full, that she was glad of anyone to unburthen it to. At ten o'clock she devoted her time to the nobility, who crowded to pay their compliments to her. She waited all the morning for news from Court, but none came. All the afternoon, she amused herself with putting M. de Montpensier's apartment in order, which she did with her own hands. You know what happened at night. The next morning, which was Friday, I waited upon her, and found her in bed; her grief redoubled at seeing me; she called me to her, embraced me, and whelmed me with her tears. "Ah!" said she, "you remember what you said to me yesterday. What foresight! what cruel foresight!" In short she made me weep, to see her weep so violently. I have seen her twice since; she still continues in great affliction, but behaves to me as to a person that sympathized with her in her distress; in which she is not mistaken, for I really feel sentiments for her that are seldom felt for persons of such superior rank. This, however, between us two and Madame de Coulanges; for you are sensible that this chit-chat would appear ridiculous to others.

LETTER XX

Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Gri an

Paris, Friday, February 6, 1671.

My affliction would be light indeed if I were capable of giving you a description of it. I shall not therefore attempt it. I search everywhere in vain for my dear child ; I see her not ! and every step she takes carries her still farther from me ! I returned to Sainte Marie's half dead, weeping all the way ; I thought my very heart and soul had been torn from me. Good God ! how cruel a separation is this ! I begged to be alone ; they led me into Madame Housset's apartment, where they made a fire. Agnes stayed with me, but without speaking a word, for that was our agreement. I passed five whole hours in this manner, without ceasing to sigh or sob : every thought brought death with it. I wrote to M. de Grignan, you may easily guess in what style. Then I went to Madame de la Fayette's, who renewed my sorrows by the interest she took in them. She was alone, indisposed, and in affliction for the death of a sister : the very situation I could have wished her to be in. Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld came ; they talked to me of nothing but you, how much reason I had to be concerned, and of their intending to speak in a proper manner to Mellusina.[1] You may take my word that she will have it pretty handsomely : d'Hacqueville will give you a full account of the affair. About eight o'clock I came home, but, ah ! think what I felt on going upstairs ! That room which I used to enter with such pleasure was open to me indeed, but I found everything in it disordered and desolate, and your sweet little girl there, who put me so in mind of my own. Think what I suffered ! the night passed in mournful vigils, and the returning light found me in the same state of despondency. The afternoon I passed with Madame de la Troche [2]

[1] Madame de Marans, sister to Mademoiselle de Montalais, maid of honour, and chief favourite to Princess Henrietta of England.

[2] N . . . de Varennes, widow of the Marquis de la Troche, of the house of Savoniere in Anjou. She had a son a Field-Marshal who was killed the 18th September, 1691, at the Battle of Leuze, and was an officer of great merit.

at the Arsenal. In the evening I received your letters, which renewed the violence of my first emotions. I shall finish what I am now writing this evening at M. de Coulanges', where I shall pick up some news for you ; though, from the concern you have left everyone in behind you, I might, if I would, fill my letter with compliments.

Friday night.

The news that I am now about to impart to you, I learned at Madame de Lavardin's. Madame de la Fayette told me, that she and M. de la Rochefoucauld had yesterday a conversation with Mellusina, the particulars of which cannot easily be committed to writing : but you may suppose that she was very much confounded at the consciousness of her wicked behaviour, which was laid open to her without the least reserve. She thinks herself very happy in what was offered her, and very readily came into it ; which is, that she shall for the future observe a strict silence, and on this condition no more will be said to her of the affair. You have friends here that have interested themselves in the warmest manner on your behalf : I do not find one that has not a very great love and esteem for you, and that does not sympathize with me in my grief. I have not yet been anywhere but at Madame de la Fayette's. All our friends strive to find me out, and get me with them ; but I dread it like death. I entreat you, my dear child, to take care of your health ; preserve it for my sake, and do not give way to those cruel neglects, which may have fatal consequences. I embrace you with a tenderness that is not to be equalled ; no offence, I hope, to the most tender.

The marriage articles between Mademoiselle d'Houdancourt and Monsieur de Ventadour were signed this morning. The Abbé de Chambonnas also was this morning nominated to the bishopric of Lodève. The Princess [1] will set out on Ash-Wednesday for Châteauroux, where the Prince is desirous she should make some stay. M. de la Marguerie succeeds M. d'Estampes, who is dead, in his place in the council. Madame de Mazarin comes to Paris to-night ; the King has

[1] Clara Clementina de Maille Brezé, Princess of Condé.

declared himself her protector, and has sent a carriage, with a military escort, to bring her from Lis.

I have a piece of ingratitude to inform you of that will not displease you, and of which I shall make a liberal use when I write my book upon that subject. Marshal d'Albert has detected Madame d'H . . . not only in a commerce of gallantry with Monsieur de Béthune, which he would hitherto never credit, but likewise in having reported of Madame Scarron and him the worst things imaginable. She has endeavoured to do them both all the ill offices that were in her power, which has been proved so clearly that Madame Scarron and all the Richelieu family have resolved to see her no more. Here is a woman fallen indeed ! However, she has this consolation, that she has contributed largely to bring it upon herself.

LETTER XXI

Paris, Monday, February 9, 1671.

I receive your letters in the same way in which you received my ring. I am in tears while I read them. My heart seems ready to burst. Bystanders would think that you had treated me ill in your letters, or were sick, or that some accident had happened to you ; whereas everything is the reverse. You love me, my dear child, you love me, and you tell me so in a manner that makes my tears flow in torrents. You continue your journey without any disagreeable accident. To know this is the thing I could most desire ; and yet am I in this deplorable condition ! And do you then take a pleasure in thinking of me ? in talking of me ? and have more satisfaction in writing your sentiments to me than in telling them ? In whatever way they come they meet with a reception, the warmth of which can only be known to those who love as I do. In expressing yourself thus, you make me feel the greatest tenderness for you, that is possible to be felt : and if you think of me, be assured that I, on my side, am continually thinking of you. Mine is what the devotees call an habitual

thought ; it is what we ought to have for the Divine Being, were we to do our duty. Nothing is capable of diverting me from it. I see your carriage continually driving on, never, never to come nearer to me ; I fancy myself on the road, and am always in apprehension of the carriage overturning. I am almost distracted at the violent rains we have had the last three days, and am frightened to death at the thought of the Rhône. I have at this instant a map before me ; I know every place you sleep at. To-night you are at Nevers, Sunday you will be at Lyons, where you will receive this letter. I could only write to you at Moulins by Madame de Guénégaud. I have had but two letters from you ; perhaps a third is on the road ; they are my only comfort. I ask for no other. I am utterly incapable of seeing much company at a time ; I may recover the feeling hereafter, but it is out of the question now. The Duchesses of Verneciel and Arpajon have used all their endeavours to divert me, for which I am much obliged to them : never surely were there better people than in this country. I was all the day on Saturday at Madame de Villars,[1] talking of you, and weeping ; she takes a great share in my sorrow. Yesterday I heard Monsieur d'Agen[2] preach, and was at Madame de Puisieux and Madame du Pui-du-Fou's, who both send you a thousand remembrances. This evening I shall sup tête-à-tête[3] in the Faubourgs. These are my carnivals. I have a mass said for you every day. This is no superstitious devotion. I have seen Adhémar[4] but for a moment ; I am going to write to him, and thank him for his bed ; for which I am

[1] Marie de Bellefond, Marchioness of Villars, mother to the late Marshal of that name.

[2] Claude Joli, a celebrated preacher, afterwards Bishop of Agen.

[3] With Madame de la Fayette.

[4] Joseph Adhémar de Monteil, brother to M. de Grignan, known at first by the name of Adhémar, was, after the death of Charles Philip d'Adhémar, his brother, which happened the 6th of February, 1672, called the Chevalier de Grignan ; but being afterwards married to N . . . d'Oraison, he resumed the name of Count Adhémar. In 1675 he was Colonel to a regiment of Horse, at the head of which he signalized himself on several occasions, particularly at the Battle of Altenheim. He was made Field-Marshal in 1688, and, had not repeated attacks of gout prevented him from continuing in the Service, he would doubtless, from his reputation, merit, and illustrious birth, have attained to the most considerable military honours. He died without issue the 19th November, 1713, at the age of sixty-nine.

more obliged to him even than you are. If you would give me real pleasure, take care of your health, sleep in that little snug bed, eat broth, and exert that courage which I want. Continue to write to me. The friendships you left behind you here are all increased ; and I should never have done with compliments if I were to tell you how much everyone is concerned about your health.

Mademoiselle d'Harcourt was married the day before yesterday ; there was a grand *souper en maigre* given to the whole family. Yesterday there was a grand ball, and at night a supper for the King and Queen, and ladies of the Court, who were extremely brilliant on the occasion ; it was one of the most splendid entertainments that could possibly be seen.

Madame d'H . . . is gone off in the greatest despair. She had lost all her friends, and was fully convicted of what Madame Scarron had so long defended her against, and, in short, of every kind of treachery imaginable. Let me know when you have received my letters. I shall seal this presently.

Monday night.

I shall make up my packet before I go to the Faubourgs, and shall direct it to the intendant of Lyons. I am charmed with the distinction you observe in your letters respecting me. Ah, my dear, I deserve it, for the distinguishing love I bear you.

I must now tell you what I learned concerning the entertainment yesterday. The court-yards belonging to the Hôtel de Guise were illuminated with upwards of 2,000 lamps. The Queen went first of all into the apartment of Madame de Guise, which was lighted and decorated in a most sumptuous manner ; the ladies of the Court were all ranged round Her Majesty on their knees, without any distinction of rank. Supper was served in that apartment. There were forty ladies at table ; the supper was very magnificent. The King entered, and looked gravely round the room, without sitting down to table. After supper the company went to an upper apartment, where everything was prepared for the ball. The King led out the Queen, and honoured the assembly by dancing three or four courants, and then returned to the Louvre with his

usual attendants. Mademoiselle was not there. This is all I know of the entertainment.

I am resolved to see the countryman from Sully, that brought me your letter yesterday. I intend to give him something to drink. I look upon him as a happy creature in having seen you. Ah, what would I give could I see you but for a moment! and how do I regret the moments I have lost! I form *dragons* [1] to myself as well as other people. Dirval [2] has heard of the affair of Mellusina; he says you are rightly served; that he told you of the jests she made of you at the first lying-in, but you would not hear a word of it; from which time he never came near you. That creature has long spoken ill of you, but nothing could persuade you of it but your own eyes. And our coadjutor too, will you not make it up with him for my sake? Do you not yet find him to be *Seignor Corbeau*? I earnestly wish to see you friends again. Ah, my dear child, for Heaven's sake tell me, is every possible care taken of you? But there is no believing you in what relates to your health. So you would not make use of this bed? This is just like not letting me send for Madame Robinette. Adieu, my dearest child! the only passion of my soul, the joy and anxiety of my life!

LETTER XXII

To the Same

Paris, Thursday, February 12, 1671.

This is only line precursory, for I shall not write to you till to-morrow; but I wish you to know what I have just heard.

Yesterday the President Amelot, after having made a great number of visits, towards night found himself a good deal out of order, and was soon afterwards seized with a violent

[1] A familiar expression between the mother and daughter, for vexation or anxiety.
[2] The Count d'Avaux.

apoplectic fit, of which he died about eight o'clock this morning. I would have you write to his wife ; the whole family are in the greatest affliction.

The Duchess de la Vallière sent a letter to the King, the contents of which have not transpired, and then a message by the Marshal de Bellefond, to say, "that she would have quitted the Court, after having lost the honour of his good opinion, had she been able to prevail with herself to see him no more ; but that her weakness on that head had been so great that she was scarcely capable even now of making a sacrifice of it to her God : she was resolved, however, that the remains of the passion she had felt for him should constitute part of her penance, and, as she had devoted her youth to him, it could not be thought much if the rest of her life were spent in cares for her own salvation." The King wept bitterly, and sent Monsieur Colbert to Chaillot to beg her to come directly to Versailles, that he might speak to her once more. Monsieur Colbert accordingly conducted her thither. The King had a whole hour's conversation with her, and wept a great deal. Madame de Montespan ran with open arms, and tears in her eyes, to receive her. We do not rightly understand all this. Some say she will remain at Versailles, and continue about the Court ; others that she will return to Chaillot. We shall see.

LETTER XXIII

To the Same

Friday, February 20, 1671.

I cannot express how desirous I am to hear from you. Consider, my dear, I have not had a letter since that from La Palice : I know nothing of the rest of your journey to Lyons, nor of your route to Provence. I am very certain that there are letters for me ; but then I want them, and they do not come. I have nothing left to comfort and amuse me but writing to you.

You must know that Wednesday night last, after I came from M. de Coulanges where we had been making up our packets for the post, I began to think of going to bed. That is nothing very extraordinary, you will say ; but what follows is so. About three o'clock in the morning I was awakened with a cry of Thieves ! Fire ! and it seemed so near, and grew so loud, that I had not the least doubt of its being in the house ; I even fancied I heard them talking of my little granddaughter. I imagined she was burned to death, and in that apprehension got up without a light, trembling in such a manner that I could scarcely stand. I ran directly to her room, which is the room that was yours, and found everything quiet ; but I saw Guitant's house all in flames, and the fire spreading to Madame de Vauvineux's. The flames cast a light over our court-yard and that of Guitant, that made them look shocking. All was outcry, hurry, and confusion, and the beams and joists falling down made a dreadful noise. I immediately ordered our doors to be opened, and my people to give assistance. Monsieur de Guitant sent me a casket of valuables, which I secured in my cabinet, and then went into the street, to gape like the rest. There I found Monsieur and Madame Guitant in a manner naked ; Madame de Vauvineux, the Venetian Ambassador, and all his people, with little Vauvineux,[1] whom they were carrying fast asleep to the Ambassador's house, with a great deal of movables and plate. Madame de Vauvineux had removed all her goods. As for our house, I knew it was as safe as if it had been on an island, but I was greatly concerned for my poor neighbours. Madame Guêton and her brother gave some excellent directions, but we were all in consternation ; the fire was so fierce that there was no approaching it, and no one supposed it would cease till it had burnt poor Guitant's house entirely down. Guitant himself was a melancholy object ; he was for flying to save his mother, who was in the midst of the flames, as he supposed, in the upper part of the house ; but his wife clung about him, and held him as tightly as she could. He was in the greatest distress between the grief

[1] Charlotte Elizabeth de Cochefilet, married in 1679 to Charles de Rohan, Prince de Guéméné, Duke de Montbason.

of not being able to save his mother, and the fear of injuring his wife, who was nearly five months with child. At last he begged me to lay hold of her, which I did, and he went in search of his mother, who, he found, had passed through the flames and was safe. He then endeavoured to save some papers, but found it impossible to get near the place where they were. At length he came back to the spot where he had left us, and where I had prevailed on his wife to sit down. Some charitable Capuchins worked so well, and so skilfully, that they cut off the communication of the fire. Water was thrown upon the rest that was burning, and at last the battle ceased for want of combatants, but not till several of the best apartments were entirely consumed. It was looked upon as fortunate that any part of the house was saved ; though as it is poor Guitant will lose at least ten thousand crowns : for they propose to rebuild the room that was painted and gilded. There were several fine pictures of M. Le Blanc's lost, whose house it was, besides tables, looking-glasses, tapestry, and other valuable pieces of furniture. They are greatly concerned about some letters, which I imagine to be those of the Prince. By this it was near five o'clock in the morning, and time to think of getting Madame de Guitant to rest ; I offered her my bed, but Madame Guêton put her into hers, as she had several apartments in her house unoccupied. We wished her to be bled, and sent for Boucher, who is apprehensive of a miscarriage from the violence of the fright. She is still at Madame Guêton's, where everybody goes to see her. You will naturally ask, how the fire happened ; but that no one can tell. There was not a spark in the room where it first broke out. Could anyone have thought of diverting himself at so melancholy a time, what pictures might he not have drawn of us in the situation we were then in ! Guitant was naked, except his shirt and drawers ; his wife was without stockings, and had lost one of her slippers ; Madame de Vauvineux was in a short under-petticoat, without a night-gown ; all the footmen and neighbours were in their night-caps. The Ambassador, in his night-gown and long peruke, maintained very well the importance of a serenissimo ; but his secretary was a most admirable figure.

You talk of the breaſt of Hercules ; this was quite another thing ; we had a full view of it : it was white, fat, plump, and perfectly exposed, for the ſtring that should have tied his shirt had been loſt in the engagement. So much for the melancholy news of one quarter. Let me beg of Deville [1] that he would take his rounds every night, after the family is in bed, to see that the fire is out everywhere, for we cannot be too careful to prevent accidents of this kind. I hope the water was favourable to you in your passage ; in a word, I wish you every happiness, and implore the God of heaven to preserve you from every evil.

Monsieur de Ventadour was to have been married on Thursday, that is yeſterday, but is ill of a fever. The Marshal de la Motte has loſt as good as five hundred crown's worth of fish. The other day while we were at table at M. du Man's, Courcelles told us he had two such great bumps on his head, that he could not get his wig on. This silly speech made us all rise from table before we had done with the fruit, for fear of laughing in his face. Presently after in came d'Olonne, upon which M. de la Rochefoucauld whispers me, " Madame, these two can never ſtay in a room together " : and so it proved ; for shortly after Courcelles went away.

Here are a number of trifles for you, my dear child ; for to be continually telling you that I love you, that I think of nothing but you, that I employ myself about nothing but what concerns you, that you are the delight of my life, and that no one was ever so tenderly beloved, muſt certainly be a tiresome repetition.

LETTER XXIV

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, March 4, 1671.

Ah ! my dear child, what a letter ! What a description of the condition you have been in ! how sadly should I have kept

[1] Maître d'hôtel, or house ſteward, to Monsieur de Grignan.

my word with you, had I made you a promise of not being terrified at so much danger ! I know it is over now ; but it is impossible to think of your life having been so near to its end, and not shudder with horror : and Monsieur de Grignan to let you steer the boat ; and when you were rash and venturous, to take a pleasure in being still more so himself, instead of staying till the storm was over ! one would think he wished to expose you. Oh, Heavens ! how much better would it have been to have had a little less courage, and to have told you plainly, that, if you were not afraid, he was ; and not have suffered you to have passed the Rhône in such weather ! I cannot think what became of all his tenderness for you at that moment. The Rhône, a river that strikes everyone with dread ! the bridge of Avignon, which it would be wrong to pass, even with the most wary precaution ! and behold a violent squall of wind throws you on a sudden under one of the arches ! What a miracle that you had not been dashed to pieces, and every creature drowned in an instant ! I tremble whenever I think of it ; I have waked in such fright and distress, that I have been scarcely mistress of myself since. Do you still look upon the Rhône as no more than a common river ? Were you not, tell me truly, greatly terrified at the prospect of death, so near, and seemingly so inevitable ? Will you not another time be less daring ? Has not this adventure exhibited the dangers of the scene in their true light ? Tell me how you felt. I hope at least you returned thanks to Heaven on your knees for your deliverance. I shall come upon M. de Grignan for this. The coadjutor too shall have his share : he was scolded even about the mountain of Tarara ; but that appears like the plains of Nemours to me now. Monsieur Busche has been to see me ; I thought I should have thrown my arms around the man's neck, when I considered how safely he had conveyed you : I held him a long while in discourse ; asked him how you looked, how you were ; and then dismissed him with something to drink my health. This letter will appear very ridiculous to you ; for you will receive it at a time when the bridge of Avignon will be quite out of your head. And must I still think of it ? This is

one of the misfortunes that attend a distant correspondence: but we must reconcile ourselves to it ; there is no avoiding this inconvenience ; it is natural, and it would be too great a constraint to endeavour to stifle such thoughts. We should always enter into the state of mind a person is supposed to be in at the time he is replying to anything that interests the heart. If you observe this maxim, you will make frequent excuses for me. I am expecting your account of what passed during your stay at Arles. I know you must have seen a great many people there. Do you not love me now, for making you learn Italian ? What service it was to you with the Vice-Legate ! Your description of that scene is excellent. But how little was I pleased with the rest of your letter ! However, I will spare you the renewal of that eternal theme, the bridge of Avignon. But while I live I shall never forget it.

LETTER XXV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, March 13, 1671.

To the joy of my heart, I am alone in my own apartment, and writing quietly to you—a most agreeable situation. I dined to-day at Madame de Lavardin's after having been to Bourdaloüe, where I saw the mothers of the church, for so I call the Princesses of Conti and Longueville. All the world was at the sermon and the sermon was worthy of the audience. I thought of you twenty times, and wished as often that you were with me : you would have been delighted to hear it, and I should have been still more delighted to have seen you listening to it. Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld was at Madame de Lavardin's, and received with pleasantry the compliment you sent him : we talked a great deal about you. Monsieur d'Ambres was there with his cousin de Brissac : he appeared greatly interested in your supposed shipwreck ; and but one opinion prevailed respecting your temerity. Monsieur de la

Rochefoucauld said that you wished to appear courageous in the hope that some compassionate person would hinder you from going ; and that finding no such person, you must have been precisely in the situation of poor Scaramouch. We have been to the fair to see a monster of a woman ; she is taller than Riberpré by a whole head : she was brought to bed the other day, of two enormous children, who came into the world abreast, with their arms a-kimbo. She is a perfect giantess. I have given your compliments to the de Rambouillets, who send you a thousand in return. I have been at Madame du Pui-du-Fou's, and at Madame de Maillane's, for the third time : I often smile to myself at the pleasure I take in these little things. And now, should you suppose that the Queen's women are all run mad, you would not suppose amiss : for about a week since, Mesd. de Ludre, Coëtlogon, and little Ruvroi, were bitten by a dog belonging to Théobon, which has since died mad ; so that de Ludre, Coëtlogon, and Ruvroi, are set out this morning for Dieppe, for the purpose of bathing in the salt water : it is a melancholy journey for them, Benserade was quite in despair ; Theobon would not go, though she was slightly bitten ; but the Queen will not let her be in waiting, till it is seen how this adventure terminates. Can you fancy de Ludre an Andromeda ? For my part, I think I see her bound to a rock, and Tréville on a flying horse, slaying the monster. Ah ! my *Cot, matame de Grignan, vat a ting it is to pe trown naket into te sea !* [1]

Here is a budget full of nonsense, but not a syllable yet from you : you may suppose that I can guess at what you are doing ; but the state of your health and your mind is too precious for me to rest satisfied with mere conjecture. The most trifling circumstances that relate to those we love are as dear to us as the concerns of others about whom we are indifferent, are troublesome. In this truth we have often agreed. La Vauvineux sends you a thousand compliments ; her daughter has been very ill, and so has Madame d'Arpajon : take notice of all this, and of Madame de Verneuil likewise, when you have leisure. I send you a letter from M. de Condom,

[1] Madame de Ludre's way of speaking.



NINON DE L'ENCLOS

[*face p. 46*

which I received enclosed in a very pretty note. Your brother wears the chains of Ninon ; [1] I wish they may do him no harm. There are minds that shudder at such ties. This same Ninon corrupted the morals of his father. Let us commend him to God. A Christian, or at least one who wishes to be a Christian, cannot see these irregularities without concern. Ah, Bourdaloüe ! what divine truths did you tell us to-day on the subject of death ! Madame de la Fayette was there for the first time in her life, and was overcome with admiration : she is highly delighted with your remembrance of her. I have made her a present of a fine copy of your picture ; it ornaments a room in which you are never forgotten. If you are still in the same humour you were in at Sainte Marie's, and preserve my letters, see if you have not received one dated the 18th of February.

A circumstance took place yesterday at Mademoiselle's which gave me no small pleasure. Who should come in but Madame de Gêvres, with all her airs and graces ! I fancy she expected I should have offered her my place ; but, to say the truth, I have owed her a little grudge for her conduct the other day, and now I paid her with interest, for I did not stir. Mademoiselle was in bed ; Madame de Gêvres was therefore obliged to place herself at the lower end of the room, a provoking thing to be sure. The Princess called for drink ; somebody must present the napkin. I perceived Madame de Gêvres drawing the glove from her withered hand, upon which I gave Madame d'Arpajon, who was above me, a push, which she understood ; and pulling off her glove, with the best grace in the world, advanced a step, got before the Duchess, took the napkin, and presented it. The Duchess was perfectly embarrassed ; for she had reached the upper end of the room, and had pulled off her gloves, only to have the mortification of being a nearer witness of Madame d'Arpajon's presenting the napkin before her. My dear child, I am very wicked ; this pleased me infinitely : it was uncommonly well done. Would anyone have thought of depriving Madame d'Arpajon of a little piece of honour, which is naturally her due, as being

[1] Mademoiselle de l'Enclos.

one of the bed-chamber? Madame de Puisieux was very diverted at it. As for Mademoiselle, she did not dare look up, and my countenance was not the most settled. After this, a thousand kind things were said to me about you; and Mademoiselle was pleased to order me to tell you, that she is very glad you escaped drowning, and are in good health.

I shall give you the two volumes of La Fontaine; and be as angry as you please, I insist upon it that they have some entertaining passages, and some very dull ones. We are never satisfied with having done well, and in endeavouring to do better, we do much worse.

LETTER XXVI

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, March 18, 1671.

I have received two packets at once, which have been delayed for a considerable time. By these I am at length informed from yourself, of your entry into Aix, but you do not mention whether your husband was with you, or in what manner Vardes honoured your triumph; but you describe the triumph itself very humorously, as well as the embarrassment you were under, and your many misplaced civilities. I wish to God that I had been with you; not that I should have done better than yourself, for I have not so good a gift of fixing names upon faces; on the contrary, I daily commit a thousand blunders in that way; but I think I could have been of some assistance to you, at least I should have made courtesies enough: it is true, that such a multiplicity of ceremonies and attentions is very tiresome. You should, nevertheless, endeavour not to be deficient in any of these points, but accommodate yourself, as much as possible, to the customs and the manners of those amongst whom you are to live.

An event has just taken place, which engrosses the whole conversation of Paris. The King has ordered Monsieur

de S . . . to resign his post, and to quit Paris, immediately. Can you guess the reason? For having cheated at play, and won upwards of five hundred thousand crowns with false cards! The man who made these cards was examined by the King himself: he denied the fact at first; but, upon His Majesty's promising him a pardon, he confessed that he had followed the trade for a long time: it is said that the affair will not stop here, for that there are several houses which he used to furnish with these cards. It was some time before the King could prevail upon himself to disgrace a man of Monsieur de S . . .'s quality; but as, for several months past, everybody that had played with him had been in a manner ruined, he thought he could not in conscience do less than bring such a scene of villainy to light. S . . . was so perfectly master of his adversaries' game, that he always made *sept et le va* upon the queen of spades, because he knew the spades lay all in the other packs. The King has constantly lost one and thirty upon clubs, and used to say, clubs never win against spades in this country. This man had given thirty pistoles to Madame de la Vallière's valets de chambre to throw all the cards they had in the house into the river, in the pretence that they were not good, and had introduced his own card-maker. He was first led into this fine way of life by one Pradier, who has since disappeared. Had S . . . known himself innocent, he would immediately have delivered himself up, and insisted upon taking his trial; but instead of this, he took the road to Languedoc, as the surest way of the two: many, however, advised him to take a journey to La Trappe,[1] after such a misfortune.

Madame d'Humières has charged me with a thousand good wishes for you; she is going to Lille, where she will receive as many honours as you did at Aix. Marshal Bellefond, through a pure motive of piety, has settled with his creditors: he has given up to them the principal part of his property, besides half the profits of his post,[2] to complete the payment

[1] *La Trappe* is a society of religious monks, remarkable for the austerity of their lives, and the severe discipline practised amongst them.

[2] That of chief maître d'hôtel, or Master of the Household, to the King.

of the arrears. This is a noble action, and shows that his visits to La Trappe have not been without effect. I went the other day to see the Duchess of Ventadour, she was as handsome as an angel. The Duchess of Nevers came in with her head dressed very ridiculously. You may believe me, for you know I am an admirer of fashion. Martin had cropped her to the very extremity of the mode.

Your brother is at St. Germain ; he divides his time with Ninon, a young actress,[1] and, to crown the whole, Despréaux. We lead him a sad life.

LETTER XXVII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, April 1, 1671.

I returned yesterday from St. Germain with Madame d'Arpajon. Everyone at Court inquired after you ; among the rest, it will not be amiss, I think, to distinguish the Queen, who accosted me, and asked how my daughter was after her affair upon the Rhône : I returned Her Majesty thanks for the honour she did you in remembering you. She then desired me to tell her in what manner you had like to have been lost : I accordingly gave her an account of your crossing the river in a storm of wind, and that a sudden gust had thrown you under an arch, within an inch of one of the piles, which if you had once touched, all the world could not have saved you. But, says the Queen, "Was her husband with her ?" "Yes, Madam, and the coadjutor too." "Really," said she, "they were greatly to blame." She gave two or three Alases ! while I was talking to her, and said many obliging things of you. Afterwards a number of ladies came in, and among the rest, the young Duchess of Ventadour, very fine

[1] Called la Champmeslé.

and very handsome ; it was some time before they brought her the divine tabouret [1] ; " Ah," said I, turning to the grand master,[2] " why do they not give it her, she has purchased it dearly enough ? " [3] He was of my opinion. In the midst of a silence in the circle, the Queen turned to me, and asked me who my granddaughter was like ? " M. de Grignan, Madam," replied I ; upon which Her Majesty exclaimed, " Indeed ! I am sorry for it " ; and added, in a low tone of voice, " She had better have resembled her mother or grandmother " : so you see how much I am indebted to you in making my court. Marshal Bellefond made me promise to distinguish him from the crowd : I made your compliments to Monsieur and Madame Duras, and to Messieurs de Charost and Montausier, and *tutti quanti* not to forget the Dauphin and Mademoiselle, who both talked a great deal to me about you. I likewise saw Madame de Ludre, she accosted me with an excess of civility and kindness that surprised me, and talked in the most affectionate manner of you ; when all of a sudden as I was going to make her a suitable answer, I found she was not attending to me, and saw her fine eyes wandering round the room ; I presently perceived it, and those who saw I took notice of it, were pleased with me, and could not help laughing. She has been dipped in the sea : [4] the sea beheld all her naked beauties, and is grown, if possible, more proud than ever ; the sea, I mean, for the pride of the fair one was rather humbled.

I have been extremely diverted with our hurly-burly headdresses ; some of them looked as if you could have blown them off their wearers' shoulders. Ninon [5] said that La Choiseul was as like the flaunting hostess of an inn, as one drop of water to another ; a most excellent simile ! But that Ninon is

[1] The tabouret is a stool to sit on in the presence of the Queen, a privilege never enjoyed but by ladies of the first quality.

[2] The Count de Lude, Grand Master of the Artillery.

[3] Monsieur de Ventadour was not only very ugly and deformed, but, at the same time, a great debauchee.

[4] See the Letter of the 13th March foregoing.

[5] Ninon de l'Enclos, famous for her wit and free-thinking.

a dangerous creature ; if you only knew how she argues upon religion, it would make you shudder. Her zeal to pervert the minds of young people is much the same as that of a certain gentleman of St. Germain that we saw once at Livri. She says, your brother has all the simplicity of the dove, that he is just like his mother ; but that Madame de Grignan has all the fire of the family, and has more sense than to be so docile. A certain person would have taken your part, and put her out of conceit with you, on that head ; but she bid him hold his tongue, and told him that she knew more of the matter than he did. What a depravity of taste ! because she knows you to be handsome and witty, she must needs saddle you with the other qualification, without which, according to her rule, there is no being perfect. I am greatly concerned for the harm she does my son in this point ; but do not take any notice of it to him. Madame de la Fayette and I use all our endeavours to disengage him from so dangerous an attachment : besides her, he has a little actress,[1] and all the players of the town upon his hands, to whom he gives suppers ; in short, he is perfectly infatuated. You know what a joke he makes of Mascaron. I fancy your Minim [2] would suit him. I never read anything more diverting than what you wrote to me about that man ; I read it to Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld, who laughed heartily at it. He desires me to tell you, that there is a certain apostle who is running up and down after his rib, which he would fain appropriate to himself, as a part of his goods and chattels ; but unluckily for him, he is not clever at enterprise. I fancy Mellusina is fallen into some pit, we do not hear a single word about her. M. de la Rochefoucauld says besides, that if he was only thirty years younger, he should certainly have a great inclination for M. de Grignan's third rib.[3] That part of your letter, where you say he has already had two of his ribs broken, made him laugh heartily : we always wish for some oddity or other to divert you, but we very much doubt whether this has not

[1] La Champmeslé.
[2] The priest who preached at Grignon.
[3] That is, to Madame de Grignan, who was M. de Grignan's third wife.

turned out rather more to your satisfaction than ours. After all, we pity you extremely, in not having the word of God preached in a suitable manner. Ah, that Bourdaloüe ! his sermon on the Passion was, they say, the most perfect thing of the kind that can be imagined ; it was the same he preached last year, but revised and altered with the assistance of some of his friends, that it might be wholly inimitable : how can one love God, if one never hears him properly spoken of ? you must really possess a greater portion of grace than others. We went the other day to hear the Abbé Montmort ; [1] I never heard a prettier sermon for so young a beginner : I wish you had such a one in the room of your Minim. He made the sign of the cross, and gave out his text ; he did not anathematize his audience, he did not load us with abuse ; he told us not to be under any apprehensions concerning death, since it was the only passage we had to a glorious resurrection with Jesus Christ. We agreed with him in this, and every one went away contented : he has nothing offensive in his manner ; he imitates Monsieur d'Agen without copying him ; he has a modest confidence, is learned, and pious ; in short, I was highly pleased with him.

Madame de Vauvineux returns you a thousand thanks : her daughter has been very ill. Madame d'Arpajon embraces you, and M. le Camus professes to adore you ; and I, my dear child, what do you think I do ?—love you, think of you incessantly, melt into tears, much oftener than I wish, busy myself in your affairs, make myself unhappy about your thoughts of me, feel all your disquiets and chagrins, wish to suffer them for you, and, if it were possible, to remove everything unpleasing from your heart, as I used to remove whatever I found superfluous or disagreeable in your apartment ; in a word, think what it is to love another infinitely beyond yourself, and this is what I do. These are often words of course, and the expression is much abused ; but I repeat it again, without profanation, and I feel it truly in its full force.

[1] Afterwards Bishop of Bayonne.

LETTER XXVIII

To the Same

Paris, Saturday, April 4, 1671.

[This letter, which is written partly by Madame de Sévigné, and partly by her friend Madame de la Troche, is wholly taken up with describing the new fashion of cutting and curling the hair, which then prevailed among the ladies of the court ; a subject which, however entertaining it might have been at that time, and between the persons concerned in the correspondence, does not appear of consequence enough to merit a translation.]

LETTER XXIX

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, April 8, 1671.

Good God ! my dear child, how charming are your letters, there are passages in them worthy of the Press : you will certainly find, some day or other, you will have a treacherous friend who will print them. You have been, it seems, to your devotions, where you found our poor sisters of St Marie. You have got a cell among them ; but take care you do not fatigue your mind too much ; gloomy reveries indulged in too much are sometimes dangerous. We shall pass lightly over painful images : you will find great satisfaction in being at a house where you are mistress.

I cannot but admire the customs of your ladies in Provence ; the description you give me of their ceremoniousness, is a finished piece in its kind : but it would drive me mad, and I cannot conceive how you bear it. You imagine that I should do admirably well in Provence ; far from it, I assure you I should be quite rude ; everything unreasonable vexes me, and want of sincerity offends me. I should say to them,

"Ladies, let us understand one another; am I to conduct you back again? If I am, I desire you will not prevent me, not let us stand wasting our time and breath to no purpose: if you do not wish this, pray spare me the ceremony of making the offer." I am not in the least surprised, that their farcical mode of proceeding puts you out of patience; I should have still less patience than you have.

But a word or two concerning your brother: Ninon has dismissed him. She is weary of loving without being loved in return; she has insisted upon his returning her letters, which he has accordingly done. I was not a little pleased at this separation. I gave him a hint of the duty he owed to God, reminded him of his former good sentiments, and entreated him not to stifle all notions of religion in his breast: had it not been for his allowing me this liberty of throwing in a word or two now and then, I should not have permitted a confidence with which I had nothing to do. But this is not all; when one side gives way, we think to repair it with the other, and are deceived. The young Merveille has not broken as yet, but she will soon, I believe. I know now why your brother came yesterday from the farther end of Paris to see me. He wanted to acquaint me with an accident that had befallen him: he found a favourable opportunity; but when he came to the point—it was a strange thing! the poor damsel never had been so entertained in her life: the disconcerted cavalier retired, thinking himself bewitched, and what is better still, he could not be easy till he had acquainted me with his disaster: we laughed very heartily at him: I told him I was overjoyed to find him punished in the sinful part; he laid the blame upon me, and told me he fancied I had given him some of the ice that was in my composition; that he did not desire to resemble me in that particular, and that I had better have conferred it on my daughter. He was resolved to apply to Pecquet to put him to rights again; said the most extravagant things in the world, and so did I too; in short, it was a scene worthy of Molière. But the truth of the matter is, this affair has given such a check to the gentleman's imagination, that he will not come to himself again very soon. In vain, I

assure him, that the empire of love abounds in tragic ſtories ; he is deaf to all reasoning on this head. The poor Chimène says, she sees plainly, that he no longer loves her, and has applied herself elsewhere for comfort. In short, this affair makes me laugh, and I wish sincerely it may be the means of weaning him from a ſtate so offensive to God, and dangerous to his own soul. Ninon told him, that he was *a mere pompion fricasseed in snow.* See what it is to keep good company ! one learns such pretty expressions !

Your brother told me the other day of a player who being resolved to marry, though he laboured under a certain dangerous disorder, one of his companions said to him, " Zounds, cannot you ſtay till you are cured ? you will be the ruin of us all." I thought there was something very epigrammatical in this turn.

A few days ago Madame de Marans was at Madame de la Fayette's ; " Lord bleſs me," says she, " I muſt have my hair cut ! " " Dear Madam," says de la Fayette, pointedly, to her, " I would not advise you to have that done upon any account ; it is a fashion that becomes none but young people." If that ſtroke does not please you, let us hear something better of your own.

I send you a letter I received from Monsieur de Marseille. I fancy my answer will be such as you will approve, since you would have it frank and sincere, " and agreeable to that friendship you have sworn to yourself, which is built on intereſt, and cemented by dissimulation." This laſt clause is in Tacitus : I think I never read anything more beautiful : I approve the sentiment, and shall adopt it, since it muſt be so. Adieu, my love, I think of nothing but you ; and if by a miracle, which I neither desire nor wish, you should for a moment be absent from my mind, I should fancy myself as void of soul as one of Benoit's figures.[1]

Monsieur d'Ambres has resigned his regiment to the King for 80,000 francs, and 180,000 livres, which makes the 200,000 francs.[2] He thinks himself very happy in being out of the infantry, that is, the hospital.

[1] An artiſt very famous for his figures in wax.

[2] The price that was given for the poſt of Lieutenant-General of Upper Guyenne.

LETTER XXX

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, April 15, 1671.

I have just received the letter you sent me by Gacé.[1] You speak of Provence as if it were Norway ; I always thought it had been warm there ; and I had persuaded myself of it so strongly, that the other day, which was remarkably sultry, made me quite melancholy ; the company thought it was from my apprehension that you were still more incommoded with heat than myself ; and, indeed, I could not imagine that to be the case without being uncomfortable. And now, my dear child, I must tell you that chocolate no longer holds the place in my esteem that it used to do ; fashion has influenced me, as it always does ; those who used to praise chocolate, now speak ill of it, revile it, and accuse it of all the disorders to which we are subject. It occasions the vapours, and palpitation of the heart ; it flatters you for a time indeed, but presently lights up a fever that continues, and at length carries you to the grave. In short, my dear, the grand master,[2] who used to live upon it, is become its declared enemy ; judge then, if I can be its friend.[3] Let me entreat you no longer to be an advocate for it, for it is no longer in fashion with the genteel part of the world.

I have not seen Gacé ; I believe I shall kiss him. Good heavens ! a man who has seen you, who has but just quitted you, who has even spoken to you ! with what pleasure shall I behold him ! Your description of Cardinal Grimaldi [4] is excellent ; the words, " Does it sting ? " are exquisite, and made me laugh heartily ; I wish you could oftener do

[1] Afterwards Marshal Martignon.

[2] The Count de Lude.

[3] It was said that the Count de Lude was in love with Madame de Sévigné, but as he was a man whose attachment could never be of prejudice to the character of any lady, Madame de Sévigné was the first to laugh at it. See the *Amours des Gauls*, by the Count de Bussy.

[4] Archbishop of Aix.

the same. Montgobert diverts me ; she understands your language ; how happy she is in having good sense, and in being so near you ! I have no patience with fools ! they make my blood boil. I thank you for remembering the game of reversis, and for playing at mall. The latter is admirably adapted to persons who are well made and skilful, like yourself. I shall play at it in my desert. Apropos of deserts. Did not Adhémar send you word that the coadjutor's servant, who had been at La Trappe, was returned almost beside himself, not having been able to undergo the austerities of that place ? They are looking out for a convent of cotton for him, in order to recover him a little from his present wretched condition. I wish that La Trappe, in aiming at more than is consistent with human nature, may not, by that means, become a mad-house.

I wept bitterly when I wrote to you from Livri, and I weep anew at the affectionate manner in which you received my letter, and the effects it produced in your heart. Our souls were very communicative, and passed faithfully from Livri into Provence ; if you feel the same sentiments every time I afflict myself about you, I pity you, and advise you to renounce so unpleasant a sympathy. Never, surely, was anything so easily awakened as my affection for you ; a thousand circumstances, a thousand thoughts, a thousand remembrances occupy my heart ; but always in the manner you could wish ; my memory presents me with nothing but pleasing images of your amiable qualities ; I hope yours does the same. The letter you have written to your brother is an excellent one. You guessed rightly, he has quite the fashionable air about the eyes : but no Easter, no jubilee. The only good thing I know in him is, that he avoids sacrilege ; indeed, I endeavoured to persuade him from it : but the disease of his soul is fallen upon his body, and his mistresses are not inclined to bear with patience this inconvenience. God directs all for the best ; I hope the journey to Lorraine will break up these vile connexions. He is very facetious upon his disaster ; he says he is like old Æson, and is resolved to be boiled in a cauldron of herbs, to recover

his youth. He relates all his follies to me ; I scold him, insiſt upon hearing no more, and yet I ſtill liſten to him. He enlivens me, and does all in his power to amuse me. I know he has a regard for me ; he profeſses to be charmed with the affection you show me ; he gives me many rubs upon my own attachment, which I confess is greateſt when I would moſt conceal it. And I will confess, my dear, yet another thing, that I believe you love me likewise ; you appear to be ſteady, and I think your word is to be depended upon, which is one reason among others of my eſteeming you so much. So your gentlemen begin to be used to you, but the ladies have as yet no taſte for you ! Poor souls !

LETTER XXXI

To the Same

Paris, Sunday, April 26, 1671.

This is Sunday, April 26th ; and this letter will not go out till Wednesday, but it is not so much a letter as a narrative that I have juſt learned from Moreuil, of what passed at Chantilly with regard to poor Vatel. I wrote to you laſt Friday, that he had ſtabbed himself ; these are the particulars of the affair. The King arrived there on Thursday night ; the walk, and the collation, which was served in a place set apart for the purpose, and ſtrewed with jonquils, were juſt as they should be. Supper was served, but there was no roaſt meat at one or two of the tables, on account of Vatel's having been obliged to provide several dinners more than were expected. This affected his spirits, and he was heard to say several times, " I have loſt my fame ! I cannot bear this disgrace ! " " My head is quite bewildered," said he to Gourville. " I have not had a wink of sleep these twelve nights, I wish you would aſſiſt me in giving orders." Gourville did all he could to comfort and aſſiſt him ; but the failure of the roaſt meat (which, however, did not happen at the King's table, but at

some of the other twenty-five) was always uppermoſt with him. Gourville mentioned it to the Prince, who went directly to Vatel's apartment, and said to him, "Everything is extremely well conducted, Vatel; nothing could be more admirable than His Majeſty's supper." "Your Highness's goodness," replied he, "overwhelms me; I am sensible that there was a deficiency of roaſt meat at two tables." "Not at all," said the Prince; "do not perplex yourself, and all will go well." Midnight came: the fireworks did not succeed, they were covered with a thick cloud; they coſt sixteen thousand francs. At four o'clock in the morning Vatel went round, and found everybody asleep; he met one of the under-purveyors, who was juſt come in with only two loads of fish. "What!" said he, "is this all?" "Yes, sir," said the man, not knowing that Vatel had dispatched other people to all the seaports round. Vatel waited for some time; the other purveyors did not arrive; his head grew diſtracted; he thought there was no more fish to be had; he flew to Gourville: "Sir," said he, "I cannot outlive this disgrace." Gourville laughed at him; Vatel, however, went to his apartment, and setting the hilt of his sword againſt the door, after two ineffectual attempts, succeeded in the third, in forcing the sword through his heart. At that inſtant the carriers arrived with the fish; Vatel was inquired after to diſtribute it; they ran to his apartment, knocked at the door, but received no answer; upon which they broke it open, and found him weltering in his blood. A messenger was immediately dispatched to acquaint the Prince with what had happened, who was like a man in despair. The Duke wept, for his journey to Burgundy depended upon Vatel. The Prince related the whole affair to His Majeſty with an expression of great concern: it was considered as the consequence of too nice a sense of honour; some blamed, others praised him for his courage. The King said he had put off this excursion for more than five years, because he was aware that it would be attended with infinite trouble, and told the Prince that he ought to have had but two tables, and not have been at the expense of so many, and declared he would never suffer him to



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(Ille-et-Vilaine)

[*face p. 60*

do so again ; but all this was too late for poor Vatel. However, Gourville endeavoured to supply the loss of Vatel ; which he did in great measure. The dinner was elegant, the collation was the same. They supped, they walked, they hunted ; all was perfumed with jonquils, all was enchantment. Yesterday, which was Saturday, the same entertainments were renewed ; and in the evening the King set out for Liancourt, where he had ordered a *media-noche* ; [1] he is to stay there three days. This is what Moreuil has told me, hoping I should acquaint you with it. I wash my hands of the rest, for I know nothing about it. M. d'Hacqueville, who was present at the scene, will no doubt give you a faithful account of all that passed ; but, because his handwriting is not quite so legible as mine, I write too ; if I am circumstantial, it is because, on such an occasion, I should like circumstantiality myself.

LETTER XXXII

To the Same

From the Rocks.[2]

Sunday, May 31, 1671.

At last, my child, I am at the Rocks. Can I behold these walks ; can I view these ornaments, this little closet, these books, these rooms, and not die with grief ? Some recollections are agreeable ; but there are others again so lively and so tender that they are hardly supportable ; such are mine with respect to you. And you may easily guess the effect this is likely to produce in a heart like mine.

If you continue pretty well, my dear child, I believe I shall not come to you till next year. Brittany and Provence are

[1] *Media-noche* is a flesh-meal just after midnight, among the Roman Catholics.
[2] The name of Madame de Sévigné's estate in Brittany.

not very compatible ; long journeys are strange things : if we were always to continue in the same mind we are in at the end of a journey, we should never stir from the place we were then in ; but Providence in kindness to us causes us to forget it. It is much the same with lying-in women. Heaven permits the forgetfulness that the world may be peopled, and that folks may take journeys to Provence. Mine therefore will afford me the greatest joy I ever received in my life, but how cruel a thought is it to see no end to your stay there ! I more and more admire and applaud your prudence ; though, to tell you the truth, I am greatly affected with this impossibility; but I hope time will make us see things in a different light. We must always live in hope ; without that consolation there would be no living. I sometimes pass such melancholy moments in the woods, that I return as changed as one just out of a fever. I fancy you pass your time pretty well at Marseilles. Do not fail to tell me how you were received at Grignan. The people here had designed to make a kind of triumphal entry for my son ; Vaillant had drawn out near 1,500 men under arms, very well dressed, with new ribands round their necks, and had marched them within a league of the Rocks. But guess what happened ! our Abbé had written word that we should be there on Tuesday, and afterwards forgot to mention it to us. Accordingly these poor people were waiting under arms the whole day till ten o'clock at night, when they returned home very much chagrined at their disappointment ; and behold the next day, which was Wednesday, we came in as quiet and peaceable as lambs, without dreaming that a little army had been drawn out to receive us ! We were a good deal vexed at this mistake, but there was no remedy ; so much for our first setting out. Mademoiselle du Plessis is just as you left her ; she has formed a new acquaintance at Vitré that she plumes herself mightily upon, because she is a great genius, has read all the romances, and, more than that, has had two letters from the Princess de Tarante. I was wicked enough to set Vaillant upon telling her that I was jealous of this new friend of hers, and that, when I heard of their intimacy, it had given me the greatest

uneasiness, though I had taken no notice of it to her. It requires the pen of a Molière to describe all she says upon the occasion ; and it is highly amusing to see how artfully she manages me, and with what care she avoids speaking of my supposed rival before my face ; I too play my part very well. My little trees are grown surprisingly ; Pilois [1] is raising their ſtately heads to the clouds. In ſhort, nothing can be more beautiful than theſe walks which you firſt ſaw planted. You may remember I once gave you a little device which was thought very ſuitable. Here is a motto I wrote the other day upon a tree which I intend for my ſon who is juſt returned from Candia. *Vago di fama.*[2] Is it not pretty, notwithſtanding its conciseneſs ? Yeſterday I had another inſcribed in honour of the idlers, *Bella coſa far niente* ! [3] Ah ! my dear child, what a wild romantic air my letters have ! What is become of the time when I uſed to talk of Paris like other people ? now you will hear of nothing but myſelf ; and to ſhow you what confidence I have in your affection I am perſuaded, this will be the moſt agreeable intelligence I can give you. I am highly pleaſed with my company here. Our Abbé is at all times an excellent companion. La Mouſſe and my ſon are ſatisfied with me, and I with them. We always ſeek one another ; and if buſineſs at any time takes me from them, they are at their wit's end, and think it very odd in me to prefer a farmer's account to a tale of La Fontaine's. They are all paſſionately in love with you. I fancy you will hear from them ſoon. I choose, however, to be beforehand with them, for I do not love talking to you in a crowd. My deareſt child, will you always love me ? my life depends upon your affection ! that, as I told you the other day, conſtitutes all my joy and all my ſorrow. Let me add, that my proſpects are embittered with the cruel thought that I muſt neceſſarily paſs ſo much of my life at a diſtance from you.

[1] The gardener at the Rocks.
[2] Anxious for fame.
[3] What a fine thing it is to do nothing!

LETTER XXXIII

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, July 1, 1671.

At length the month of June is departed! I am really surprised at it, for I thought it never would have had an end. Do you not recollect a September that you thought had no inclination to give way to October? This month has gone on in the same way; but now I think it is finished: yes, I am sure it is.

Fouesnal is a delightful place; my son and I went there yesterday, in a coach and six; nothing can be more delightful: we seemed to fly. We made some little songs as we went along, which I send you. The esteem we have for your prose does not hinder us from making you partaker in our verse. Madame de la Fayette is very much pleased with the letter you wrote her. Well, my dear, it is all settled, your brother is going to leave us; La Mousse and I shall now apply ourselves to good reading. Tasso amuses us much at present; we read above all the trifles we can lay our hands on, in compliance with my son's humour, who is then in his glory. I shall now take long walks tête-â-tête by myself, as Tonquedec said. Do you imagine I think of you? But I have my *little friend* here, whom I also tenderly love. There is certainly nothing so charming as a picture, when well done: say what you will, yours does you great justice. Your letters from Grignan are my support and comfort under all my vexations: I wait for them with impatience; but to say the truth, those I write are of an insufferable length; I am resolved to be more reasonable in future. It is not fair to judge of you by myself; it would be rash; you have not so much time upon your hands as I have.

Mademoiselle du Plessis came in, an hour ago, and smacked me on the cheek in her boisterous way, and then teased me to show her that part of your letter to me in which you mention her. My son had the insolence to tell her, before my face,

that you remembered her in a very kind manner ; and turning to me, "Show her the passage, madam," says he, "that she may be convinced of it." I coloured up, as you do when you think of other people's faults ; and was obliged to tell a thousand lies, and protest I had burnt your letter. Could anything be more malicious ? I have received a very complimentary and civil letter from Guitant : he tells me he has discovered a thousand good qualities in me, that he had not perceived before ; and I, not choosing to answer humbly that I was afraid I should destroy his good opinion of me, replied, that I hoped the longer he knew me, the better he would like me. I had much rather answer all the extravagances that are said to me, thus, than make use of the commonplace replies, that you and I have so often laughed at.

I am persuaded that you will meet with great assistance in Madame de Simiane ; we should lay aside all form and ceremony with such people as soon as possible, and make them a party in our pleasures and whims, otherwise we should soon die, and it would be dying a villainous death too. I said I would put an end to this letter, I am now resolved to do it. I do myself great violence, however, in quitting you so soon, my dear ; our correspondence is the sole pleasure of my life : I am persuaded you believe me.

LETTER XXXIV

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, July 22, 1671.

St. Magdalen's-day, on which my father was killed some years ago.

Madame de Chaulnes came here on Sunday ; but can you guess in what way ? No otherwise than on foot, and between eleven and twelve at night : she and her suite were taken at Vitré for a company of Bohemians. She wished to have

no ceremony on her coming into the town ; and her wish was complied with ; for nobody looked at her, and those who saw her, took her for what I have told you. She came from Nantes by way of Guerche. Her carriages had ſtuck between two rocks, at about half a league from Vitré, the road being too narrow for them to pass ; so that the rocks were obliged to be chiselled, which was not completed till next morning at daybreak, when the equipage arrived at Vitré. I visited her on Monday ; and, you may suppose, she was glad to see me. The fair Murinette [1] is with her. They will be quite alone at Vitré, till the arrival of M. de Chaulnes, who is making the tour of Brittany, and the States who will assemble in about ten days. You may guess of what consequence I am in such a solitude. Madame de Chaulnes does not know what to do with herself, and has no resource but in me. You may suppose that I carry it with a high hand over Madame *de Kerborgne* : I expect her here after dinner. All my walks are in order, and my park is in full beauty. I ſhall ask her to ſtay here two or three days, that she may have as much walking as she likes. As I make some merit of having waited here purposely for her, I intend to acquit myself in a way she ſhall not easily forget, and yet give her nothing but what the country affords. But enough on this subject.

The Madame Quintin that we used to say was like you, is become paralytic, and unable to support herself : ask her the reason : she is twenty years old. As she passed my door this morning, she ſtopped and asked for a glass of wine : she had some brought her, and then went on to Pertre, to consult a sort of physician that is in great eſteem in this country. What think you of this frank and easy way of our Bretons ? she was but juſt come from Vitré, and could not be very thirſty : so I suppose it was only to give herself airs, and let me know that she had got a Paris-built carriage. My dear child, shall I never have done with my Brittany news ? What a vile correspondence ! but what can you expect of a woman from Vitré ? It is said the Court is going to Fontainebleau :

[1] Anne Marie du Pui de Murinais, who was afterwards Marchioness Kerman.

the journey to Rochefort and Chambert is at an end ; and it is imagined, that in disarranging the plans for autumn, they will derange also the Dauphin's fever, which seized him last autumn at St. Germain ; this year it will be cheated ; it will not find him there again. You know that M. de Condom [1] has had the Abbacy of Rebais given him, which was once the late Abbé de Foix's, poor man. They are in mourning here for the Duke of Anjou, which will somewhat embarrass me, if I am to stay with the States. Our Abbé cannot quit his chapel ; that will be the strongest reason in our favour : for as to the noise and bustle in Vitré, it will not be half so agreeable to me as the solitude of my woods and the company of my books. When I leave Paris and my friends, it is not to appear at the States : my merit, small as it is, has not yet reduced me to the necessity of hiding myself in a country town, like a company of wretched strollers. I embrace you, my child, with a tenderness that fills my soul. Assure M. de Grignan of my love and esteem, and receive the protestations of our Abbé for yourself.

LETTER XXXV

To the Same

Vitré, Wednesday, August 12, 1671.

At length, my dear child, I am in the midst of the States, otherwise the States would have been in the midst of the Rocks. Last Sunday, just as I had sealed my letter, I saw four coaches and six drive into the court, with fifty armed men on horseback, several led horses, and a number of pages mounted. These were M. de Chaulnes, M. de Rohan, M. de Lavardin, Messrs. Coëtlogon, de Lomaria, the Barons de Guais, the Bishops of Rennes and St. Malo, the Messieurs d'Argouges,

[1] Jacques Benignus Bossuet, preceptor to the Dauphin, afterwards Bishop of Meaux.

and eight or ten more whom I did not know. I forgot M. d'Harrouïs, who is not worth mentioning. I received them all : a great many compliments passed on both sides ; and after a walk, with which they were all very well pleased, a very good and elegant collation appeared at one end of the mall ; and, to crown the whole, there was Burgundy as plentiful as water. They could not be persuaded but it was the work of enchantment. M. de Chaulnes pressed me to go to Vitré ; accordingly I arrived here on Monday night. Madame de Chaulnes gave me an elegant supper, with the comedy of *Tartuffe* after it, not badly played, I assure you, for a ſtrolling company ; and then we had a ball, where the minuet and jigs had very nearly reduced me to tears ; for they brought you ſo freſh to my remembrance, that I could ſcarcely reſiſt the impulſe, and was obliged to ſeek ſomething to divert my thoughts. They talk to me of you here very frequently, and I do not ponder long for an anſwer ; for I am generally thinking of you at the ſame time, ſo that I ſometimes fancy they ſee my thoughts through my ſtays. Yeſterday I received all Brittany at my tower of Sévigné. I was at the play again: it was *Andromache* : it coſt me above half a dozen tears ; enough in conſcience for ſtrolling players. At night we had a ſupper, and a ball. I wiſh you could ſee the elegance of M. de Lomaria, and in what ſtyle he takes off and puts on his hat : he outdoes all our courtiers, and might put them to the bluſh : he has 60,000 livres a year, is juſt come from college, is very handſome and agreeable, and would very gladly have you for a wife. I would not have you ſuppoſe that your health is not drunk conſtantly here. The obligation indeed is not very great ; but, ſuch as it is, you owe it every day to half Brittany. They begin with me, and then Madame de Grignan comes of courſe. The civilities they ſhow me are ſo ridiculous, and the women of this country are ſuch fools, that you would think there was not a perſon of quality in the town but myſelf, though it is full of faſhionable people. Of your acquaintance Tonquedec, the Count des Chapelles, Pomenars, the Abbé de Montigni, who is Biſhop of St. Paul de Lyon, and a thouſand others, are here ; they talk of you,

and we laugh at our neighbour. Madame de Coëtquen is ill here of a fever : Chesières is somewhat better ; there has been a deputation of the States to compliment him. We are as polite here as the polite Lavardin himself, who is perfectly adored among them ; he has a good share of heavy merit, like Grave wine. My Abbé goes on with his building, and cannot be prevailed on to stay at Vitré : he comes, however, and dines with us. I shall stay here till Monday, and then shall retire to my solitude, where I shall pass eight or ten days, after which I shall return to take my leave of them all ; for the end of the month will see the end of the whole affair. Our present has been made this week and more : the demand was for three millions [1] : we immediately offered two millions and a half ; which was accepted. Over and above this the governor is to have 50,000 crowns, M. de Lavardin 80,000 francs, and the rest of the officers in proportion ; the whole for two years. You may imagine that as much wine passes through the bodies of our Bretons, as there does water under our bridges ; for it is upon this commodity the immense sums of money are procured that are distributed among the States.

Now, thank God, you are pretty well instructed in what relates to your good country. But all this while I have no letter from you, and, consequently, nothing to answer : so I must of course write what I see and hear. Pomenars is a most extraordinary creature : I do not know any man to whom I would so readily wish two heads ; for he will never be able to carry his own safe off. For my part, I long to see the week at an end, that I may repay all the civilities I have received from the good folks here in a proper manner, and then retire to enjoy myself at the Rocks. Farewell, my dearest child, I always expect your letters with impatience. Your health is a subject that concerns me nearly : I believe you are persuaded of the truth of this ; so that, without desiring you to *do me the justice of believing*, I may put an end to my letter and sleep securely on what you think of my friendship.

[1] Of livres.

LETTER XXXVI

To the Same

Vitré, Wednesday, September 2, 1671.

Here is a letter that comes to me directly from Paris, without passing through the hands of du Bois [1]; and what is more, according to the date, I received it just five days after it was written, so that it is altogether a miraculous one. There is no need of a miracle to render your letters dear to me. The remembrance of you is not to be banished by any consideration; but itself banishes all others. Our States may sing, and dance, and drink, as long as they please, your dear image makes its way through all, and fixes itself in my heart, as on its proper throne. There has been a little grumbling here, but it is subsiding, and I hope in two or three days it will be at an end; I wish it earnestly. I dare not go any more to the Rocks; the way there is now too well known: Sunday there were no less than five coaches-and-six. I long to return to my beloved solitude, which has been very much admired; Combourg is not to be compared to it. But you must not think our houses in Brittany are like Grignan; there is a wide difference between them. As to Monsieur de Lomaria, without mincing the matter, he has all the air of a Mercury, in his dancing, his bow, his manner of pulling off and putting on his hat, his figure, his face; in short, the fellow is quite captivating. The Murinette beauty would have him with all her heart; but he has not that same inclination for her. The Count des Chapelles is charmed with what you say of him in my letter. Pomenars sends you word, that he is now bolder than ever, for he is sure he shall never be hanged, as he has escaped so long. The Abbé comes and dines with us sometimes, and La Mousse with him, who does not seem at all embarrassed: I have set him upon such a good footing with M. and Madame

[1] The postmaster charged with the care of Madame de Sévigné's letters, to send them the speediest way to Brittany.

de Chaulnes, M. Boucherat, and the Bishop of Léon, that he is received by them all just like myself. He talks about the minute particulars with the Bishop, who is as violent a Cartesian as himself, and yet, in the same breath, they maintain the faculty of thinking in brutes ; [1] these are my gentleman's notions, and he argues very learnedly upon them : he is as far gone in this philosophy as a man can well be, and the Prince has likewise given into his opinion. Their discussions entertain me highly. I hear that our dear little one is very pretty ; she will amuse me very much at home this winter. Farewell, my dearest child ! I embrace you ; but what will be the joy of my heart, when I hear once more the sound of your voice ? I flatter myself that day will come, as well as so many others that are not wished for.

LETTER XXXVII

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 23, 1671.

We have again, my dear child, the most horrid weather you can imagine. It has been one continued storm for these four days past. All our walks are under water ; there is no such thing as stirring out : our masons and carpenters keep close within doors : in short I detest this country, and am every moment wishing for your sunshine, while you, perhaps, wish as much for my rain. We are both right.

The poor Abbé of Montigni, Bishop of Léon, is at Vitré ; he sets out, I believe, to-day for a more pleasant country than this : in a word, after having been five or six times bandied between life and death, an increase of fever has at length

[1] It is well known what long disputes the question, whether brutes have a soul, excited, and that Descartes maintained that they are mere machines. It is well known, too, that hypocrites did not fail to involve religion in this philosophical problem. To allow a soul to brutes was nothing more nor less than atheism : yet the very same persons accused Descartes of being an atheist ; no doubt upon equally good foundations.

decided in favour of the latter : he is under no concern about it, for he is perfectly delirious ; but it is a great shock to his brother the Advocate-General.[1] We often weep together, for I constantly visit him, and am indeed his only comfort : it is on such occasions as these that we should exert ourselves. I am at present reading in my chamber, without daring to show my face out of doors : my heart, however, is at ease, in the belief that you are well, and that makes me proof against tempests ; for we have nothing else here ; were it not for the repose in which my heart indulges, I should not very patiently submit to the affronts I have received from this month of September : at this time of the year, and in the midst of all one's workmen, it is downright treachery. Oh ! I could make a fine noise ! *Quos ego.*

I still go on with Nicole, who delights me ; I have not yet met with any lessons against rain ; but expect to find some in every page, for nothing is wanting ; and that conformity to the will of God, which he so admirably inculcates, would be sufficient to make me easy on this head, did I not stand in need of a specific. In short, I think it an excellent book : no one has as yet come up to these authors, for I give Pascal credit for half the fine things in it. We are so fond of hearing ourselves spoken of, that, be it good or ill, it is still pleasing. I have even forgiven him his *puffing up* of the heart, in consideration of the rest ; and I maintain that there cannot be a more expressive word to describe the pride and vanity of the human heart, which is nothing but wind : find a better if you can, and in the meanwhile I will finish my perusal of the book. We are likewise reading the history of France, from the reign of King John : I wish to be as well acquainted with the history of my own country as I am with that of Rome, where I have neither relations nor friends : here we find names familiar to us ; and while we can get books, we are in no danger of hanging ourselves. You may easily suppose that, as long as I hold in this humour, I cannot fail of being very agreeable to La Mousse. For our devotions we have the collection of letters of M. de St. Cyran ; M. d'Andilly will

[1] To the Parliament of Rennes.

send them to you, and you will find them admirable. Is not this, my dear child, in the language of a true recluse ?

I am told that Madame de Verneuil is very ill. The King talked a whole hour with the worthy d'Andilly in as free, as gracious, and as pleasant a manner as possible : he took pains to show himself to the good old man, and obtain his juſt admiration : he expreſſed great pleaſure in having made choice of M. de Pomponne ; adding, that he expected his arrival with impatience, and ſhould take the care of his fortune upon himſelf, as he knew he was not very rich. He told d'Andilly, that it was downright vanity in him to mention in the preface to his Joſeph, that he was eighty years of age ; it was a perfect ſin : in ſhort, they were very gay and witty. His Majeſty ſaid beſides, that he muſt not expect he would ſuffer him to remain ſhut up in his deſert, for he ſhould very frequently ſend for him to Court where he ſhould be glad to diſtinguiſh him as a perſon who had in ſo many reſpects rendered himſelf illuſtrious. When the good old man aſſured him of his fidelity and attachment, the King replied, that he had not the leaſt doubt of it, for he who ſerved his God well, could not fail of ſerving his King well alſo. In ſhort, it was a moſt extraordinary interview. His Majeſty took care to have his dinner ſent from his own table ; and ordered one of his own coaches to take him an airing. He talked of him the whole day with the greateſt admiration. As for M. d'Andilly, he was ſo tranſported, that he cried out every moment, " I muſt humble myſelf ! " finding how much he ſtood in need of it. You may guess the pleaſure this has given me, and the intereſt I take in it. I wish my letters may afford you as much pleaſure as yours give me.

LETTER XXXVIII

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 7, 1671.

You know I am always a little opinionated with reſpect to my reading ; ſo that it is for the intereſt of those I converſe

with, that I should read none but the best books. I can think of nothing at present but M. Nicole's *Moral Reflections*. His treatise on the means of preserving peace among men, delights me. I never met with anything so truly practical, yet so full of fire and imagination. If you have not yet read it, I beg you will. If you have read it, read it again with additional attention: for my part, I think all mankind are included in it. I am persuaded it was made for me, and hope to profit by it; at least I shall endeavour to do so. You know I could never bear to hear the old say, 'I am too old to mend': I could much sooner pardon the young for saying, 'I am too young.' Youth is in itself so amiable, that were the soul as perfect as the body, we could not forbear adoring it; but when youth is past, it is then that we ought to think of improvements, and endeavour to supply the loss of personal charms, by the graces and perfections of the mind. I have long made this the subject of meditation, and am determined to work every day at my mind, my soul, my heart, and my sentiments. I am full of this at present, and therefore fill my letter with it, having nothing besides of greater consequence to tell you.

I suppose you are at Lambesc; but I cannot see you clearly from hence: there is a mist about my imagination that conceals you from my sight. I had formed an idea of Grignan, I saw your apartment, used to walk upon your terrace, and went to mass at your beautiful church; but now I am quite at a loss: I wait, with great impatience, for intelligence from your new quarters. I will write no more to-day, though I have a great deal of time upon my hands; for I have nothing but trifles to tell you, which would be an affront to the Lady-Lieutenant of a Province, who is holding the States, and, consequently, has weighty affairs upon her hands; it may do well enough when you are in your little palace at Apollo. Our Abbé and our La Mousse are very much yours; and I, my dear child, need I tell you what I am, or what you are to me? The Count de Guiche is at Court so singular in his air and manner, that he is quite the hero of a romance, and scarcely resembles the rest of mankind; at least so they tell me.

LETTER XXXIX

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, October 18, 1671.

I cannot help laughing at your idea of sending your first letter to me to some other person, that it might not be lost. It puts me in mind of a Breton lady who desired she might have the pleadings that gained me a lawsuit, as the infallible means of gaining hers.

You are at Lambesc then, my child, but with your size increased to your chin, I am frightened at your Provence fashion : so they think nothing of it, it seems, when there is only one child at a birth ; a girl would not dare complain of so trifling a circumstance, and the married women of that country have generally two or three at a time. I do not like your being so immense ; it must, at least, be very troublesome to you.

Attend, Count, it is to you that I am now speaking ; you shall meet with nothing but abuse from me for all your civilities ; you delight so much in your own works, that instead of having pity on my poor child, you do nothing but laugh at her ; this plainly shows that you do not know what it is to bear children : but hear me, I have something else to say to you, which is this : that if, after this boy, you do not give her a little rest, I shall not think you have the least regard either for her or for me, and I will not come to Provence : your swallows may twitter as long as they please ; I shall not heed them and more than that, I have to tell you, that I shall take your wife from you. Do you think I gave her to you to be killed ; to have her health, youth, and beauty all destroyed at once ? This is no jest : I shall ask the favour of you on my knees, in proper time and place : in the meantime you may admire my assurance, in threatening you with not coming to Provence. You see by this, that your friendship and civilities are not lost upon me. Both the Abbé and myself are persuaded you will be glad to see us. We shall bring you

La Mousse, who sends you his thanks for your kind remembrance; and provided I do not find this woman everlastingly with child, you shall see if we are not persons of our word: meanwhile be careful of her; and mind that she does not lie in at Lambesc. My dear Count, farewell.

Now, my love, I return to you, and assure you that I greatly pity you. Pray take care not to lie in at Lambesc. When you are past your eighth month, you have not an hour certain. You have M. Coulanges with you now. How happy is he in beholding you! He did well to take courage, and you to press him to it: embrace him for me, and all your Grignans likewise; for there is no refraining from loving them. My aunt tells me that your little girl pinches just as you used to do: she is a great rogue: I long to see her. Alas! I shall stand in great need of your black man to take me a journey through the air; that by land is horrible to think of. I am absolutely afraid of being surrounded in this place by water. Indeed, after seeing you set out for Provence through unfathomable depths, I may think nothing impossible.

But, to return to your story; I made a jest of La Mousse's but I do not do so by yours; for indeed it is very well told, and so well, that it made me shudder in reading it; my heart fluttered; indeed it is the most extraordinary thing that can be. But this Augur I have certainly seen, and shall take an opportunity of talking to him, and the person that tells this so naturally can certainly be no other than a sylph. After the promise you have made me, I do not doubt but there will be great disputes who shall bring you here. The reward is worthy of being disputed; and if I do not see you arrive quickly, I shall fancy a war has broken out amongst your champions. It will be a war very justly founded; and, if sylphs could die they could not die on a more noble occasion. In short, my dear, I give you many thanks for your agreeable manner of relating this original story: it is the first of the kind that I would answer for the truth of.

There is something very droll in the pretended miracles of your hermit; but if he believes the truth of them himself, I am much mistaken. M. de Grignan is very right to give

him a lecture now and then, or his vanity might lead him from the midst of his desert into the midst of purgatory. A fine jaunt truly ! If he is bound no farther he need not be at so much pains, there are a great many roads thither. I shall be in great fear for his salvation, till I am assured by you that it is secure. I can give credit to you ; for I know that you are not to be imposed upon by appearances, God is all-powerful ; no one doubts it : but we in no wise merit that he should make his power known to us.

I am very glad M. de Grignan made so good a speech ; this must be pleasant to him ; others are out of the question. M. de Chaulnes spoke very well too, a little heavily, but that was not amiss in a Governor. M. de Lavardin has a happy way of expressing himself. I have told Corbinelli that his packet must certainly have been lost with the letters I so deeply regret. Adieu, my dear child, I love you so passionately, that I hide a great part of my love, not to oppress you with it. I thank you for your cares, your affection, and your letters : my life hangs on these.

LETTER XL

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 28, 1671.

Scorpions, my dear ! they are certainly worthy a chapter in M. de Coulange's book. The surprise of your bowels at the ice and chocolate is a matter I am resolved to sift to the bottom with him, or rather with you, and ask you seriously if your bowels were not offended with it ; and if they did not give you fine colics, to teach you how to give them such antiperistases ; [1] there is a grand word for you. I had a mind to be friends again with chocolate, and so took some the day before yesterday,

[1] A term in philosophy borrowed from the Greek, and signifying the action of any two opposite qualities, that mutally increase the vigour and activity of each other.

by way of digesting my dinner, that I might make the better supper; and yesterday took some again by way of nourishment, to enable me to fast till supper-time: it had every way the desired effect; and what I think very extraordinary is, that it acted according to my wishes. I do not know what you may have been doing this morning; but I have been half-way up my legs in dew, laying lines for some walks that I am making round my park, which will be very beautiful when finished. If my son is fond of woods and of walks, he will have reason to bless my memory. I fancy this brother of yours is at Paris: he chooses to wait for me there, rather than come back here; and I think he is in the right. But what think you of my husband the Abbé d'Effiat? I am very unfortunate in my husbands; he is on the point of marrying a young nymph of fifteen,[1] daughter to M. and Mad. de la Baziniere; a complete piece of affectation and coquetry. The marriage is to take place in Touraine; he has given up 40,000 livres per annum in benefices for . . . God grant he may be happy with her; but it is much doubted by every one, and most people think he had better have kept to me.

M. d'Harrouïs writes to me as follows: "Let Madame de *Carignan* know that I adore her. She is with her little states; they are not such folks as we are, that give 100,000 crowns at a time; but I hope they will, at least, give her as much as we did to Mad. de Chaulnes by way of welcome." He may wish, and I may wish too; but your folks are too dry and close-fisted: the sun sucks up all their moisture, which is the only source of goodness and affection. I am still grieving for the packet I lost last week. Provence is become my native country, from thence spring all my joys and all my sorrows. I always wait with impatience for Friday: it is the day I receive letters from you. St. Pavin[2]

[1] Marie Ann Bertrand de la Baziniere was married to the Abbé d'Effiat, as the report then went, but was married afterwards to the Count de Nancré.

[2] This was a jovial Abbé, of whom Boileau thus speaks, *St. Pavin devot*, etc. He passed, like Desbarreaux and Theophilus, for an Atheist, but he was not the

some time ago made an epigram upon Friday, the day he used to see me at the Abbé's : he addressed himself to the gods, and finished with the two following lines :—

Multipliez les Vendredis
Je vous quitte tout le reſte.[1]

A l'applicazione, Signora. M. d'Angers [2] writes me wonders concerning you ; he has been frequently with M. d'Uzès,[3] who cannot speak sufficiently in your praise : you are much obliged to him for the great regard he expresses for you ; he seems brimful of affection, which dilates itself into a thousand praises that make you much admired. My Abbé, too, loves you perfectly well ; La Mousse honours you, and I leave you to yourself. Cruel ſtepmother ! a word to the dear Grignans.

LETTER XLI

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, November 29, 1671.

It is impossible, wholly impossible, my dearest child, for me to express the joy I received on opening the blessed packet that contained the news of your safe delivery. When I saw a letter in it from M. de Grignan, I did not doubt for a moment that you were brought to bed ; but then it was so ſtrange a circumſtance not to see the usual dear handwriting on the superscription ! However, there was one from you dated the 15th ; but, though I saw it, I passed it by unnoticed, that from M. de Grignan having ſtrangely confused my poor

less credulous. He was converted by means of a vision. The very night Theophilus his maſter and his friend died, he heard his name pronounced by him in a frightful voice. His valet having assured him he heard the same voice, he was convinced. He renounced the impious opinions he had professed, or rather the irreligious and voluptuous life he led.

[1] Let every day be Friday.
I care not for the reſt.

[2] Henri Arnauld, Bishop of Angers.

[3] Jacques Adhémar de Monteuil, Bishop of Uzès.

intellects. At last I ventured to open it with trembling hands and a beating heart, and found everything that my most ardent wishes could desire. How do you imagine one acts in such an excess of joy? Ask the coadjutor; you cannot be a judge yourself, having never experienced it. Shall I tell you then, how one acts? Why the heart sinks, and tears flow apace without our being able to prevent them. This was precisely my case: I wept, my dear child, but with infinite pleasure: tears like these are accompanied with sensations not to be equalled by the most lively joy. As you are a philosopher you will be able to account for these effects; I can only feel them. I am now going to have as many masses said by way of thanksgiving to God for this inestimable blessing, as I did before to request it of him. Were my present feelings to continue for any length of time, life would be too agreeable; we must therefore enjoy happiness while it is in our power; sorrow and vexation will return but too soon. How charming it was to have a boy after all, and to have him named after Provence [1]! It was everything that could be wished. My dear, I give you a thousand and a thousand thanks for the few lines you wrote me: they completed the measure of my felicity. The Abbé is as transported as myself, and our La Mousse is in raptures. Adieu, my angel, I have many letters to write besides this.

LETTER XLII

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 2, 1671.

After my first transports of joy had a little subsided I began to perceive, my dear child, that I should still be anxious for letters from Provence next Friday to complete my satisfaction. Lying-in women are liable to so many accidents, and your

[1] The procurators of Provence were his godfathers, and gave him the name of Louis Provence.

tongue is so well hung, as M. de Grignan says, that till nine days at least are happily over with you, I shall not leave this place with any degree of comfort or pleasure : so I shall wait for my letters, and then set out : those of the following Friday, I shall receive at Malicorne. I am surprised at no longer feeling the load at my heart, which used to oppress me day and night, while I was in doubt about your safety. I am now so completely happy, that I cannot cease returning thanks to the Divine Being for my peace of mind, which I did not expect so soon. I have received letters of compliment without end and without number from Paris, and here the young lord's health has been drunk for miles round. I have distributed money for drink, and feasted my own people like kings. But nothing gave me greater pleasure than a compliment I received from Pilois,[1] who came this morning with his spade upon his back and said, " My lady, I am come to let you know that I am heartily glad to hear that my lady countess has got a fine boy." Now this is to me worth all the fine speeches in the world. M. de Montmoront[2] came hither post : among other things we were talking of devices : he assures me he does not remember to have seen anywhere the one I proposed for Adhémar : he knew the one, with these words, *Da l'ardore l'ardire*[3] ; but that is not the thing : the other, he says, is much more complete, *Che peri, pur che m'inalzi.* And whether it is my own, or borrowed, he thinks it excellent. But what do you say to M. de Lauzun ? You know what a noise he made this time twelvemonth. Should we have believed it, if anyone had told us, that in less than a year he would be a prisoner ? *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity* ! They say the new Madame is quite dazzled with her grandeur. You shall hear what kind of personage she is : when her physician was presented to her, she said she had no business for one ; that she had never been bled nor taken physic in her life ; and that it was her custom, if she was ill, to take a walk of five or six miles, and that cured her at once.

[1] Madame de Sévigné's gardener.
[2] He was one of the Sévigné family.
[3] This was a device of the Marshal de Bassompiere.

But let her go, and joy go with her. You see I write to you, as I would to one who has lain in for a month. But now for M. de Grignan : he cannot be ignorant of what you must have suffered ; and, if he really loves you, must it not give him the greatest concern, to be the cause of your being thus circumstanced every year ? After such good reasons as these, I have no more to say to him on the subject, farther than to assure him that I will not come to Provence if you are with child again. I wish he may take this as a warning : for my part, it would absolutely drive me to despair ; but, however, I will keep my word : it will not be for the first time. Farewell, divine countess ; I kiss the dear infant, for whom I have a great affection ; but not so much as for the lady his mother : it will be a long while before he attains to that. I have a great desire to hear some news of your assembly, the christening, etc. A little patience, and I shall know all ; but this is a virtue I am not much practised in.

LETTER XLIII

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 9, 1671.

I am just going to set out, my dear, but leave my solitude with some regret, as I shall not find you at Paris. I much question whether I should have returned thither this winter, but for my Provence journey, which makes it in my way, it being impracticable to go all the way thither from hence, or to go to Paris as one does to Orleans. Well then, you may suppose me set out. I shall sleep at Mad. de Loresse's, who is a relation of yours, to avoid the stones of Laval. I shall be there to-morrow ; and Friday next I shall send to Laval for my letters, which will be brought me to Mêlé, where I intend to pass the night ; after that I shall think of nothing but Paris. If during this journey you should chance to be longer than usual without hearing from me, do not be uneasy

about it. I am neither with child nor lately brought to bed, nor am I afraid of a coach. I have no Avignon-bridge to pass : the weather is extremely fine ; and I shall have nothing to interrupt me ; as I am no longer under any concern about you, do not you be unhappy about me. I am loaded with compliments on the birth of my little grandson ; of whom I should be glad to hear next Friday, and still more so of you. Poor M. de Lauzun is at Pignerol ; for which M. d'Harrouïs is in great affliction ; but he tells me, that the news of your safe delivery and of the birth and christening of your little boy, shot a gleam of joy to his heart, through all the sorrow in which it was whelmed ; and I in return assured him, that his affliction had thrown a cloud over my joy. Adieu, my beloved child, we must part. I am overwhelmed with regret at leaving these woods. I will not tell you how great a part you have in my indifference to Paris. You know but too well already, how dear you are to me.

LETTER XLIV

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, December 23, 1671.

I write to you now somewhat beforehand, because I want to have a little chat with you. Just as I had sent away my packet, the day I arrived here, Du Bois brought me the letter of yours which I supposed lost ; you may guess with what pleasure I received it : I could not answer it then, for Madame de la Fayette, Madame de St. Géran, and Madame de Villars, all came to welcome me to Paris. You seem to be in all the astonishment that might be expected from such a misfortune as M. de Lauzun's : your reflections on that subject are very just and natural ; every person of understanding has made the same ; but now it begins to be no more thought of. This is an excellent country for forgetting the unhappy. The state of despair in which he began his journey was such, that

it was resolved not to quit him for a moment. When those who were with him would have had him alight in a dangerous part of the road, where they were apprehensive of the coach being overset, he made answer : " Accidents of this kind are not made for me." He declares himself innocent of anything relating to the King, and says his only crime is having too powerful enemies. The King has said nothing about the matter, a silence that shows sufficiently the nature of his crime. He imagined he was to have been left at Pierre-Encise, and accordingly, when he got to Lyons, he began by paying his compliments to M. d'Artagnan ; but when he was informed they were carrying him to Pignerol, he sighed, and said, " I am lost." He was greatly pitied in all the towns through which he passed ; and certainly his disgrace is great.

The day after he left Paris, the King sent for M. de Marsillac, and told him that he gave him " the government of Berri, which was lately de Lauzun's ". " Sire," replied Marsillac, " let your Majesty, who is so well acquainted with the rules of honour, be pleased to reflect that I was no friend to M. de Lauzun ; have the goodness to put yourself but for a moment in my place, and then judge whether I ought to accept the favour you are pleased to offer me."—" You are too scrupulous," said the King ; " I know as much of that affair as anyone, and see no reason you have to make any difficulty on that account."—" Since your Majesty is pleased to approve it," replied Marsillac, " I have no more to say, but throw myself at your feet in grateful acknowledgment."—" But," said the King, " I gave you a pension of twelve thousand francs, till something better could be done for you."—" It is true, sir ; I now return it to you again."—" And I," replied the King, " give it you a second time, and shall now do your gallant sentiments all the honour they deserve." Upon which he turned to his ministers, and acquainted them with the scruples of M. de Marsillac, adding, " I admire the difference between these two men ; Lauzun did not think it worth his while so much as to thank me for the government of Berri, nor even to take the least care about it ; and here is one who expresses the most lively gratitude." The whole of this is

ſtrictly true ; I had it from M. de la Rochefoucauld. I thought this little detail would not be displeasing to you ; if I was miſtaken, let me know, in your next. This poor man is very ill with gout, much worse than he was laſt year : he talks very frequently of you, and I believe loves you as if you were his own child. M. de Marsillac has been to see me. Everybody talks to me of my dear child. I have at length taken courage, and been talking these twelve hours with M. de Coulanges : I cannot leave the man ! it was great good fortune that brought me to reside with him. I do not know whether you have heard that Villarceaux, in speaking to the King about a poſt for his son, artfully took the opportunity of telling him that some people had taken it into their heads to tell his niece,[1] that His Majeſty had some designs upon her ; that, if it was so, he begged His Majeſty would make use of him, as an affair of that kind would be better in his hands than in any other ; and that he did not doubt of success : the King burſt into a laugh, and told him, " Villarceaux, you and I are too old to think of attacking young ladies of fifteen " ; and, like a generous and gallant man, made a jeſt of the old fellow, and spread the ſtory about among the ladies. The *angels* are greatly enraged at their uncle for it, and have resolved never to see him again ; and he, on his part, is a little ashamed of the figure he makes on the occasion. I write without disguise ; for His Majeſty appears so much to advantage in all he does, that there is no occasion for myſtery.

It is reported that there were a great number of very beautiful things found in M. de Lauzun's cabinets ; pictures without end ; naked figures, one without a head, and others with the eyes put out ; this was the lady your neighbour [2] ; locks of hair, some large, some small, ticketed to avoid confusion, and a thousand pretty things of this kind : but I would not answer for the truth of all this ; you know what a loose is given to invention on such occasions.

[1] Louise Elizabeth Rouxel, known afterwards by the name of Madame de Grancey, when she was one of the dressers to Marie Louise of Orleans, Queen of Spain : she was younger ſiſter to Marie Louise Rouxel, Countess of Merci. They were called *the angels*.

[2] Madame de Monaco, a Grammont by birth, whom Lauzun loved to diſtraction.

I have seen M. de Même, who has at length loſt his dear wife. When he saw me, he began sighing and weeping, and I could not refrain from tears myself. Everybody visits the family, and I would have you make him the compliment of condolence ; you ought to do it for the remembrance of Livri, which you are ſtill so fond of.

Is it possible that my letters should be so entertaining as you say they are ? I do not think them so when they come out of my hands ; I fancy they get it in passing through yours. It is very lucky for you that you do like them ; for you are so loaded with them that you would be heartily to be pitied, were it otherwise. M. de Coulanges wants sadly to know which of your ladies it is that has a taſte for them ; we reckon it a favourable sign for her, for my ſtyle is so loose, that it requires a good share of natural underſtanding and knowledge of the world, to be able to bear with it.

The Abbé Têtu has time enough upon his hands now, as he has no longer the Hôtel de Richelieu ; so we profit by it. You would think to look at Madame de Soubise, that she will have double twins at leaſt. The King sets out the sixth of next month for Chalons ; he is to make several other little tours, and some reviews by the way : his journey will laſt about twelve days ; but the officers and troops will proceed farther. I have a notion of another expedition being on foot like that of the Franche-Comté. You know the King is *the hero of every season.*[1] The poor courtiers are quite broke, they have not a penny left. Brancas asked me yeſterday, very seriously, to lend him money upon a pledge ; he gave me his word, that he would never mention it to anyone, and had rather, he said, be concerned with me than with another. La Trousse begged of me to let him into the secret of Pomenar's method of getting a genteel livelihood : in short, they are all put to their shifts. Farewell, my deareſt countess, there is reason in everything ; this letter is swelled into a perfect volume. I embrace the laborious Grignan, Seigneur Corbeau, the presumptuous Adhémar, and the fortunate Louis-Provence, on whom the fairies and aſtrologers have breathed good fortune, *E con questo me raccommando* : and with this I take my leave.

[1] A thought in a madrigal of Mademoiselle de Scudéry.

LETTER XLV

To the Same

The first day of the New Year, 1672.

I was last night at M. d'Uzès's. We came to a resolution to send you a courier. He promised to let me know the success of his audience with M. le Tellier, and whether he would have me bring Madame de Coulanges [1] thither with me; but as it is now past ten at night, and I have not yet heard anything from him, I shall write to you by myself. M. d'Uzès will take care to inform you of what he has done. There should be some endeavours used to soften the rigour of the orders, by representing that it would be entirely depriving M. de Grignan of the power of serving his Majesty, if he should by this means be rendered disagreeable to the province; and if, after all, it shall be necessary to send the orders, it is the opinion of the wisest people here, that it would be prudent to suspend the execution of them till an answer can be had from the King, to whom M. de Grignan has written as from a person on the spot, who is convinced that it would be best for his service to grant a pardon for this time at least. If you knew how some people blame M. de Grignan for the little regard he shows to his own country, in endeavouring to exact so strict an obedience, you would see how difficult it is to please everybody, and it would have been still worse if he had done otherwise. Those who find such charms in his post, do not know the difficulties that attend it. The King's intended journey is now broken off; but the troops continue their march to Metz. Sévigné is there by this time; La Trousse is going; and both of them fuller of loyalty than ready money. The Archbishop of Rheims [2] is here; who first sends you his good wishes, and then acquaints you, that M. d'Uzès has not been able to see his father to-day: he

[1] Madame de Coulanges was niece to the wife of M. le Tellier, Minister of State, and afterwards Chancellor of France.

[2] Charles-Maurice le Tellier.

assures me also, that the King is very well pleased with your husband ; that he accepts of the present the province has made him ; but, as his orders have not been punctually observed, he has sent *lettres de cachet* to banish the consuls. I can say no more to you by letter. All that remains now is, to be entirely devoted to His Majesty's service ; but, at the same time, to endeavour to manage a little the minds of the Provençals, which will be found the best means of having the King punctually obeyed in that country.

M. de la Rochefoucauld sends you word, and I join with him, that if you are not pleased with the letter you wrote him, it is for want of knowing better : I think he is quite in the right ; for it is full of life and spirit. You have an answer to it enclosed. Adieu, my dear countess, I think of you night and day. Furnish me with some opportunity of serving you : it will be a pleasing employment for my affection.

LETTER XLVI

To the Same

Paris, Tuesday, January 5, 1672.

Yesterday the King gave audience to the Ambassador from Holland, at which he would have the Prince, Marshal Turenne, the Duke de Bouillon, and Marshal Créqui present, that they might hear all that passed. The Ambassador presented his letter to the King, which was not read, though the Ambassador proposed it ; as the King said he already knew the contents, having a copy of it in his pocket. The Ambassador expatiated largely on the justifications mentioned in the letter, and on the strict manner in which the States had examined their conduct to discover in what they could possibly have given offence to His Majesty ; that they were not conscious of ever having been wanting in the respect that was due to him ; and yet, to their great surprise, they had heard

that the extenſive preparations His Majeſty was making were deſtined againſt them [1]; that they were ready to ſatisfy His Majeſty in everything he ſhould be pleaſed to require from them, and humbly implored him to remember the goodwill his royal predeceſſors had ever ſhown them, to whom they owed their preſent flouriſhing condition. The King, with inimitable grace and dignity, replied, that he was not now to learn the endeavours that had been uſed to ſtir up his enemies againſt him; that he thought it but prudent to prevent a ſurprise, and that he found it neceſſary for his own defence to make himſelf thus reſpected by ſea and land; that after giving a few more neceſſary orders, he ſhould, in the beginning of ſpring, take ſuch ſteps as he might judge moſt advantageous for his own glory, and the good of his kingdom; and then gave the ambaſſador to underſtand by a motion of his head, that he would have no reply. The letter correſponded exactly with the ambaſſador's ſpeech, except that it concluded with aſſuring His Majeſty, that they (the States) would do whatever he ſhould be pleaſed to order them, provided it did not oblige them to break with their allies.

The ſame day M. de la Feuillade was received at the head of the regiment of guards, and had the cuſtomary oaths adminiſtered to him by a Marſhal of France. The King, who was preſent, ſpoke himſelf to the regiment, and told them that he had given them M. de Feuillade for their *meſtre de camp*; and then, with his own hand, preſented him with the pike [2]; which is commonly done by a commiſſioner appointed by the King; but His Majeſty was reſolved that no mark of diſtinction or favour ſhould be wanting on the occaſion.

You know Langlée; he is as inſolent and impertinent as poſſible: he was at play the other day with the Count de Grammont, who, upon his taking too great liberties, ſaid, "M. de Langlée, keep theſe familiarities till you play with the King."

[1] The war againſt the United Provinces, for which Louis XIV had leagued with England and ſeveral German Princes, was on the point of breaking out. The Engliſh began it in March by attacking the Dutch fleet, and, in their cuſtomary way, made war firſt and declared it afterwards.

[2] It was the cuſtom then to receive the pike on ſuch occaſions.

Marshal Bellefond has requested leave of the King to dispose of his post.[1] No one will do it so well as he. Everybody believes, and I especially, that it is to pay his debts, and retire from the world, to think of his salvation.

The procurator-general of the court of aids[2] is made first president there: this is a great advancement for him. Do not fail to write to him on the occasion, one or other of you; and whichever it is, let the other add a line or two in the letter. President Nicolai is restored to his post.[3] This is what may be called news.

LETTER XLVII

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, January 13, 1672.

For Heaven's sake, my dear child, what do you mean? What pleasure can you take in thus abusing your person, and understanding, vilifying your conduct, and saying that one must have great good-nature to think of you sometimes? Though I am certain you cannot believe all you say, yet it hurts me to hear it: you really make me angry with you; and though, perhaps, I ought not to answer seriously things that are only said in jest, yet I cannot help scolding you before I go any farther. You are excellent again, when you say you are afraid of wits. Alas! if you knew how insignificant they are when you are by, and how encumbered they are with their own dear persons, you would not value them at all. Do you remember how you used to be deceived in them sometimes? Do not let distance magnify objects too much; but it is one of its common effects.

We sup every evening at Madame Scarron's; she has a most engaging wit, and an understanding surprisingly just

[1] Of Chief Master of the Household to the King.
[2] Nicolas le Camus.
[3] Of first President of the Chamber of Accounts.

and clear. It is a pleasure to hear her sometimes reason upon the horrid confusion and distractions of a country with which she is very well acquainted. The vexations that d'Heudicourt undergoes in a place that appears so dazzling and glorious ; the continual rage of de Lauzun ; the gloomy chagrin and cares of the court ladies, from which the most envied are not always exempt ; are things which she describes in the most agreeable and entertaining manner. Such conversations as these lead us insensibly from one moral reflection to another, sometimes of a religious, sometimes of a political kind. You are frequently one of our subjects : she admires your wit and manners ; and, whenever you return hither, you are sure of being highly in favour.

But let me give you an instance of the King's goodness and generosity, to show you what a pleasure it is to serve so amiable a master. He sent for Marshal Bellefond into his closet the other day, and thus accosted him : " Monsieur le Maréchal, I insist upon knowing your reasons for quitting my service. Is it through a principle of devotion ? Is it from an inclination to retire ? Or is it on account of your debts ? If it be the latter, I myself will take charge of them, and inform myself of the state of your affairs." The Marshal was sensibly affected with this goodness : " Sire," said he, " it is my debts : I am overwhelmed with them, and cannot bear to see some of my friends, who assisted me with their fortunes, likely to suffer on my account, without having it in my power to satisfy them." " Well then," said the King, " they shall have security for what is owing to them : I now give you a hundred thousand francs on your house at Versailles, and a grant of four hundred thousand more, as a security in case of your death. The hundred thousand francs will enable you to pay off the arrears, and so now you remain in my service." That heart must be insensible indeed, that could refuse the most implicit obedience to such a master, who enters with so much goodness and condescension into the interest of his servants. Accordingly, the Marshal made no farther resistance : he is now reinstated in his place, and loaded with favours. This is all strictly true.

Not a night passes at St. Germain without balls, plays, or masquerades. The King shows an assiduity to divert this Madame, that he never did for the other. Racine has brought out a new piece called *Bajazet*, which they say carries everything before it : indeed, it does not go *in emperando*, as the others did. Monsieur de Tallard says, that it as much exceeds the best piece of Corneille's as Corneille's does one of Boyer's ; this now is what you may call praising in the lump : there is nothing like telling the truth : however, our eyes and ears will inform us more fully ; for

Du bruit de Bajazet mon ame importunée [1]

obliges me to go immediately to the play ; we shall see what it is.

I have been at Livri : ah, my dear child, how well did I keep my word with you, and how many tender thoughts of you filled my breast ! It was delightful weather, though very cold ; but the sun shone finely, and every tree was hung with pearls and crystals, that formed a pleasing diversity of colours. I walked a great deal : the next day I dined at Pomponne : it would not be an easy matter to recount all that passed during a stay of five hours : however, I was not at all tired with my visit. Monsieur de Pomponne will be here in three or four days : I should be very much vexed, if I was obliged to apply to him about your Provence affairs ; I am persuaded he will not hear me : you see I give myself airs of knowledge. But really nothing comes up to M. d'Uzès ; I never saw a man of better understanding, nor one so capable of giving sound advice : I wait to see him, that I may inform you of what he has done at St. Germain.

You desire me to write you long letters ; I think you have now sufficient reason to be contented : I am sometimes frightened at the length of them myself ; and were it not for your agreeable flattery, I should never think of venturing them out of my hands. Madame de Brissac is excellently provided for the winter, in M. de Longueville and the Count de Guiche ; but nothing is meant but what is fair and honourable, only she takes a pleasure in being adored. La Marans

[1] A line in Boileau.

is never seen now, either at Madame de la Fayette's or at M. de la Rochefoucauld's ; we cannot find out what she is doing ; we are apt to judge a little rashly now and then : she took it into her head this summer, that she should be ravished, as if she wished it ; but I am of opinion that she is in no great danger. Good Heavens what a mad creature it is, and how long have I looked on her in the same light, as you do now ! But now let me tell you, my dear, it is not my fault that I do not see Madame de la Valavoire.[1] I am sure there is no occasion to bid me go and see her, it is enough that she has seen you, for me to run after her ; but then she is running after somebody else : for I might for ever desire her to wait at home for me ; I cannot get her to do me that favour. Your jeſt applies admirably to M. le Grand, and a very good one it is. Poor Châtillon is every day teasing us with the moſt wretched ones imaginable.

LETTER XLVIII

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, January 20, 1672.

I send you M. de la Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*, revised and corrected, with additions ; it is a present to you from himself. Some of them I can make shift to guess the meaning of ; but there are others that, to my shame be it spoken, I cannot underſtand at all. God knows how it will be with you. There is a dispute between the Archbishop of Paris and the Archbishop of Rheims about a point of ceremony. Paris will have Rheims ask leave of him, as his superior, to officiate, which Rheims will not consent to. It is said, that these two right reverends will never agree till they are thirty or forty leagues asunder ; if that is the case they are both of them

[1] A lady of quality in Provence, who was juſt then come to Paris.

likely to continue as they are. The ceremony it relates to is the canonization of one Borgia a Jesuit. The whole opera band is to exert itself on the occasion ; the ſtreets will be illuminated even to the Rue St. Antoine ; the people are all mad about it ; old Mérinville, however, has died without having seen it.

Do not deceive yourself, my child, by entertaining too good an opinion of my letters. The other day an impertinent fellow, seeing the monſtrous length of a letter I was writing to you, asked me very seriously, if I thought anybody could possibly read it all. I trembled at the thought of it, but without any intention of amendment ; for the correſpondence I have with you is my exiſtence, the sole pleasure of my life ; and every other consideration is but mean, when put in competition with it. I am uneasy about your brother ; poor fellow ! The weather is very cold : he lies in camp, and is ſtill on the march to Cologne, for the Lord knows how long ! I was in hopes of seeing him this winter, and see where he is now ! After all, I find little Mademoiselle Adhémar muſt be the comfort of my old age : I wish you could but see how fond she is of me ; how she cries after me, and hangs about me. She is not a beauty, but she is very pleasing, has a delightful voice, and a skin as clear and white . . . In short, I doat on her. You, it seems, doat on your boy ; I am very glad of it : we cannot have too many things to amuse us ; real or imaginary, it does not signify.

To-morrow there is to be a ball at Madame's. I saw a heap of jewels tossing about at Mademoiselle's, which put me in mind of paſt troubles : and yet would to Heaven we were at the same work again ! Alas ! my whole life is one continued scene of sorrow and disappointment. Dear Monsieur Nicole ! have pity on me ; and teach me to bear, with patience, the dispensations of Providence. Farewell, my dearеſt child, I dare not say I adore you ; but I cannot conceive any degree of love superior to mine : the kind and pleasing assurances you give me of yours, at once lighten and increase my sorrows.

LETTER XLIX

To the Same

Paris, Friday, February 5, 1672. This day a thousand years I was married.

I was told this morning, that the chevalier was certainly better : I have great hopes from his youth : pray Heaven reſtore him to our wiſhes. As to the Princeſs of Conti, ſhe died about ſeven or eight hours after I had made up my packet ; that is, yeſterday about four o'clock in the morning, without recovering her ſenſes for an inſtant, or uttering a ſingle intelligible word. She now and then called for Cecile, one of her women, and ejaculated, " My God ! " They were in hopes her ſenſes were returning, but ſhe ſaid no more ; and expired with a ſhriek, and with ſuch violent convulſions, that ſhe left the marks of her fingers in the arm of the women who held her. No words can deſcribe the deſolation and horror that prevailed in her apartment. The duke, the princes of Conti, Madame de Longueville, Madame de Gamache, all wept as if their hearts would break. Madame de Gêvres had recourſe to fainting, and Madame de Briſſac roared as loud as ſhe could, and threw herſelf upon the floor. In ſhort, the attendants were obliged to ſend them out of the room, for they did not know what they did ; they rather over-acted their parts ; ſomebody ſays, thoſe who ſtrive to prove too much, prove nothing. However, there was a general grief. The King ſeemed a good deal affected, and made her panegyric, by ſaying, that ſhe was more conſiderable for her virtue, than the greatneſs of her birth and ſtation. By her will, ſhe has left the education of her children to Madame de Longueville. The prince is appointed their guardian. She has left 20,000 crowns to the poor, and as much among her ſervants : ſhe has ordered her body to be interred in her own pariſh, and without the leaſt pomp, like any other common perſon. I do not know whether all theſe little matters come *à propos* or not : but you will have me write long letters, and ſo you muſt bear

with them, and take it for your pains. I saw this pious princess yesterday after she was laid out: she was greatly disfigured by the rough treatment she had received: her mouth was strangely mangled, two of her teeth were broken; and they had burnt her on the head: so that, in short, if people recover from a fit of the apoplexy, they must be miserable spectacles all the rest of their lives. Her death affords matter for a number of excellent reflections: it would have been a dreadful one to any other than herself; but to her it was the most happy that could be desired, since she felt nothing from it, and was besides always prepared. It has even affected Brancas.

I forgot to mention to you in my letter of the day before yesterday, that I met Canaples at Notre Dame, who, after a thousand compliments and good wishes for M. de Grignan and you, told me, that Marshal Villeroi had assured him, that M. de Grignan's letters had been greatly admired in the council; that they had been read with pleasure, and that the King said, he never saw anything better written. I promised him to let you know this. The lady, whose name I did not mention to you in my last, was Madame de Louvois. *A propos.* M. de Louvois took his seat at the council-table four days ago, as one of the king's ministers. His Majesty is to sign to-morrow in the presence of six counsellors of State, and our Masters of the Requests. No one knows how long this will last. This is a fine post for His Majesty, and he will, I dare say, acquit himself very well in it. I have had a thousand extravagant thoughts in my head about the Chancellor: I cannot think where I got them, in the condition I have been in for these two or three days past. The evening, the whole day, and the day following your departure from hence last year, have run so strongly in my head, and so affected my mind and spirits, that I cannot keep the tears from my eyes; and yet nothing can be more silly than to grieve for a thing that is out of our power to remedy: it is destroying ourselves to no purpose, and is just as ridiculous as forming wishes, and building castles in the air. You have too much good sense to waste your time in such trifles; but they please me.

I am charmed, my dearest child, to find you take such pleasure in my letters, though I cannot think them so entertaining as you say they are. I have sent you four reams of paper, you know on what conditions : I hope to have the greatest part of it back again between this and Easter : after that, I shall aspire to more substantial joys.

LETTER L

To the Same

Paris, Friday, February 12, 1672.

I cannot but be in great pain for you, my dear child, when I think of the concern the death of the poor chevalier must have given you : you saw him very lately, and that is enough to make you love him, as it furnished you with an opportunity of knowing the many good qualities Heaven had endowed him with. It is certain, that no one could be better born, nor possess more just and desirable sentiments. He had, besides, a very pleasing style of countenance, and was extremely fond of you ; all this could not fail of rendering him infinitely dear to you and to everyone that knew him. I can easily judge of your grief, by my own ; but shall endeavour to amuse you a little with some particulars relating to your own affairs, and with what passes in our world. I have had a long conversation with M. le Camus, who is so much in our interest, that he gives me his advice in several points : he is disgusted with anything that looks like double-dealing ; and, as his own conduct is so much the reverse, he the more easily enters into our views, which he knows to be founded in uprightness and sincerity : these should never be given up on any account ; they will always be in fashion. The world may be deceived for awhile ; but knaves will be found out in the long-run, I am persuaded.

The Marquis de Villeroi is actually set out for Lyons, as I told you. The King ordered Marshal de Créqui to tell

him to withdraw himself to some distance from the Court; it is supposed on account of something he had said at the Countess's (de Soissons). In short, there are various conjectures. The King asked Monsieur, who was just returned from Paris, what was the favourite topic there? Monsieur replied, "The poor Marquis." "And what about him?" said the King. "They say that he is in disgrace for having spoken in behalf of an unfortunate person." "What unfortunate person?" said the King. "The Chevalier de Lorraine," answered Monsieur. "And do you still think of this Chevalier de Lorraine?" said the King: "Have you really a regard for him? Should you be obliged to anyone who would restore him to you?"—"It would," replied Monsieur, "be the greatest pleasure I ever experienced in my life." "Well then," said His Majesty, "I will give you this pleasure; a courier has been dispatched to him two days ago; he will soon be here, and then I shall give him to you, and desire that you would look upon yourself as obliged to me for it the remainder of your life, and love and esteem him for my sake: I will do still more, he shall be appointed field-marshal in the army I am to command."—Upon this, Monsieur flung himself at the King's feet, and for a long time embraced his knees, and kissed his hand with inexpressible joy. His Majesty raised him up and said, "This is not the way for brothers to embrace"; and then embraced him in the most cordial and affectionate manner. Every word of this is true, it comes from the best authority; so you may make your own reflections, draw proper inferences, and redouble your present worthy dispositions for the service of your royal master. They say, that Madame is certainly to go, and that several ladies of quality are to accompany her. Various sentiments prevail at Monsieur's: some have faces of an ell long, others are as much contracted with smiling; the Chevalier de Beuvron's is, it seems, of an immeasurable length. Monsieur de Noailles is to be recalled too, and serve as lieutenant-general with M. de Schomberg, in the army to be commanded by Monsieur. The King told the Maréchal Villeroi, that it was necessary to make his son do a little penance;

but that the punishments of this life did not last for ever. You may depend upon the truth of all this. There is nothing I hate so much as false reports, and am as fond of those that are true ; if you should not happen to have the same taste for them, you are undone ; for you have them here out of number.

La Marans went to Madame de Longueville's the other day alone, and in a deep mourning veil ; she met with great slights from everyone : Langlade has sent you word how he repaid her for the ridiculous speeches she made him some time ago, and that he wished you had been behind the door. Would to heaven you had ! Madame de Brissac was at Madame de Longueville's at the same time, and with all the appearance of the most excessive grief : but unluckily on the Count de Guiche falling into conversation with her, she quite forgot her part, and was as much out as in the mad scene on the day of the princess's death,[1] where, just as she should have lost all knowledge, she quite forgot her cue, and took notice of everybody that came in. 27926

Farewell, my lovely child. Do you not think our separation long ? It affects me in such a manner that it would be more than I could bear, were it not for the pleasure I take in loving you as I do, in spite of all the misery attending.

LETTER LI

To the Same

Livri, Tuesday, March 1, 1672.

I begin my letter to-day, my dear child, it being Shrove-Tuesday, and shall finish it to-morrow. If you are at St. Marie's, I am at our Abbé's, who has been a little indisposed for these two days : it is not enough to create alarm, but

[1] The Princess de Conti.

I had rather he were quite well. Madame de Coulanges and Madame Scarron would fain have taken me with them to Vincennes ; and M. de la Rochefoucauld wanted me to come to his house to hear Molière read one of his plays ; but, in truth, I refused it all with a great deal of pleasure : and here am I at my duty, writing to you with a mixture of joy and grief : indeed it is a long time since I wrote to you. So you are retired to St Marie's ! resolved not to lose a particle of the grief you are in for the death of the poor Chevalier : you are for indulging in it to its full extent, without having anything to call you off. This application to sorrow, this endeavour to make the most of affliction, savours of one who is not so much concerned as another would be to have occasion for sorrow. I appeal to your own heart.

I find you have gone through the riot of the Carnival without any accident : guard yourself from the infection of the smallpox : I fear for you more than you do for yourself. Madame de la Troche is here ; it is true she can come to Paris. Her stay with me last year was entirely set aside by my grief at losing you. Since then, my dear child, you have been everywhere, as you say, except to Paris. Your reflections upon hope are excellent : had they been made by Bourdaloüe, all the world would have heard of them. Your wonders do not make so great a noise : *The misery of bliss* [1] is so charmingly said that we cannot too much admire a pen that can express such things. You say all that can be said on the subject of hope ; and I am so much of your opinion, that I know not whether I ought to go to Provence or not, so great is my apprehension of being obliged to leave it again. I already see how time will then gallop ; I know its way : but notwithstanding this fine reflection, my heart joins in the same conclusion with yours, and pants for nothing so earnestly as the moment of my departure from hence. I even flatter myself with the hope that something or other may happen that I may bring you back with me ; but there is no talking of these things at such a distance ; be assured, however, that no consideration of house or goods shall weigh anything with

[1] Le Malheur de bonheur.

me : I have not a thought but for you, and in what manner I am to proceed to get somewhat nearer to you : this holds the first place in my mind ; all other things follow at hazard.

I have given your letters to the Faubourgs : they are admirably well written, and M. de Grignan's reflection is admired by them all. We have often thought the same thing but you have given it a dress fit to appear in public. I did not tell them your opinion of the maxim which you think resembles a song, although I perfectly agree with you. I will endeavour to learn whether anything more was meant, than the praise of fancy or the passions ; if so, it is repugnant to strict philosophy ; if not, it requires a clearer explanation.

I supped yesterday evening at Gourville's : there were de la Rochefoucauld, de la Fayette, du Plessis, and Tournais, all waiting the arrival of the great de Pomponne, but the service of that master who is so justly dear to you both, prevented him from joining his best friends : he has a great deal of business upon his hands, on account of the number of dispatches they are sending to all parts, and the great preparations they are making to begin the war.

The Archbishop of Toulouse [1] has been created a cardinal at Rome : the news came just as M. de Laon [2] was in expectation of this dignity himself, which is a great grief to his friends. They contend, that M. de Laon has sacrificed his own interests to the service of the King, and that, rather than betray those of his country, he has slighted Cardinal Altieri, who in return has served him this trick : they are in hopes he may yet have his rank ; but it may be a long time yet, and it is always disagreeable to be in expectation.

Benserade said, and I think pleasantly enough, that the Chevalier de Lorraine's return would be a subject of joy to his friends, and of sorrow to his creatures ; for not one of them remained faithful to him during his disgrace.

I know, from good authority, that it depends wholly on us to have a peace. The Queen of Spain's answer was not

[1] Peter Bonzi, afterwards Archbishop of Narbonne.

[2] Cæsar d'Estrées, Bishop of Laon ; he was declared Cardinal some little time afterwards : he had been Cardinal *in petto* from the August of the foregoing year.

so positive as was reported : she only declared that she would abide by the treaty of peace, which admits of her assisting her allies whenever they stand in need of her assistance. It is the same with regard to the Portuguese : they have promised not to assist the Dutch, but will not give it under their hand ; this is the whole affair : if we insist upon their signing, all is lost ; if we do not, we shall soon have peace, provided the Spaniards do not declare against us. Time will clear up all this. Farewell, my dearest and best beloved child ; I am afraid your great love of solitude will injure your spirits and your eyes, by fixing them too much on the ground in your deep reveries.

LETTER LII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, April 8, 1672.

War is at length declared, and nothing is now talked of but departures. Canaples has asked the King's permission to serve in the English army, and is gone, very much displeased at not having been employed in France. Marshal du Plessis is not to leave Paris : he is become a sober citizen, and a canon ; he has laid aside his laurels, and will be a mere observer of events : nor do I think his part a bad one, considering the great reputation he has gained. He told the King he could not help envying his children the honour of serving His Majesty ; and that he now wished for nothing so much as death, since he could no longer be of use to him. The King embraced him, and said, " Marshal, the end of all our labours is to gain a reputation similar to what you have acquired : it must be pleasant to rest after so many victories." [1] I am of the same

[1] He was at the head of the King's army in the war of the Fronde, and had even beaten Turenne near Rhetel.



LOUIS FRANÇOIS ARMAND DU PLESSIS

Duc de Richelieu, at the age of thirty

(From an engraving by Mariage, after the painting by Jean-Baptiste van Loo)

opinion, and think it a great happiness not to be obliged to trust that fame to the capricious power of fortune which a long life has obtained. Marshal Bellefond is gone to La Trappe to spend the passion-week ; before he went he talked in very high terms to M. de Louvois about an abatement de Louvois wanted to make in his post of General under the Prince : he made His Majesty the arbitrator, and came off with honour.

The Queen constantly attacks me about your children and my journey to Provence, and is not pleased that your son is like you, and your daughter like her father : I always make the same answer, Madame Colbert very often talks to me of your beauty, and, indeed, who does not ? Do you know, my child, that it is absolutely necessary for you to come and look at us a little here ? I will pave the way for you in a manner that shall take all the trouble off your hands. I have spoken to M. de Pomponne about a first president : he says he knows nothing of the matter yet, but believes it will be some stranger.

My aunt is now so ill that I do not think she will be long a hindrance to me : she is almost suffocated, and swells every day more and more : there is no seeing her without being affected, and I shall be still more deeply affected with the loss of her : you know how much I always loved her. It would have been a great comfort to me to have left her with some prospect of a cure, that she might have been restored to us again. I will let you know the end of this long and melancholy illness.

M. and Madame de Coulanges are going to Brittany. There is no residence for Governors now but their Governments. We are at the eve of a sharp contest, which gives me concern. Your brother is dear to me : we are very good friends : he has an affection for me, and studies to please me, and I, on my side, am a good stepmother, and busy about his affairs. I should be very unjust to complain of either of you : you are both of you too good in your several ways. This is all you will have from me to-day, my dear love. I had a Provençal, a Breton, and a Burgundian at my toilet this morning.

LETTER LIII

From Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan

Paris, Wednesday, April 27, 1672.

I shall answer your two letters, and then give you some news from hence. Monsieur de Pomponne saw the first letter, and I intend to show him the greater part of the second ; he is gone : it was in taking leave of him before his departure that I showed it him, for it was impossible to say anything better than what you wrote concerning your affairs ; he admires you extremely. I dare not tell you to what he compares your style : he was charmed with your description of St. Baume, and will, I am sure, be much more so with your second letter. The Bishop [1] takes every opportunity of expressing his desire to be reconciled to you, as he finds matters in such a train here as to make such a reconciliation his interest, he is willing to do himself the credit of an inclination so suitable to his character and profession. It is thought that in a few days there will be a first president appointed for you.[2] I am extremely obliged to you for your lively description of St. Baume, but it will not in the least diminish my desire of seeing that hideous grotto. The greater the difficulty in getting to it, the greater will be my inclination to go ; but, after all, I do not much care about it, for you are the only thing to seek in Provence : when I have you, I shall be in possession of all I wish for. My poor aunt continues extremely ill : I say a thousand kind things to her in your name, which she receives with pleasure. M. de la Trousse writes her the finest things imaginable ; I have no idea of these professions to the dying. If love for me were to begin at such a time, I had as lief be without it. We should show our love during life, and endeavour, as you, my dear child, know so well how to do, to make it pleasant and happy, instead of heaping on those who love us sorrow and vexation ;

[1] The Bishop of Marseilles, between whom and the Grignan family there had been a dispute.

[2] For Provence, vacant by the death of Monsieur d'Apéde.

it is rather too late to change when our friends are dying. You know how I have always laughed at what is called being good-hearted at bottom : I know but one sort of good-heartedness : it is yours, and is sufficient to satisfy the most scrupulous.

I shall send Madame de Coulanges that part of my letter which belongs to her ; that dear letter must be cut into a thousand pieces ; however, I shall have a few hundreds to my own share to comfort myself with : all dear, all charming as these letters are, shall I tell you, my lovely child, that I heartily wish to receive no more of them ? But now for news.

The King sets out to-morrow : there will be a hundred thousand men the less in Paris, according to the best calculations, from the different quarters of the city : for the last four days I have done nothing but take leave. I was yesterday at the citadel, to bid adieu to the Grand Master,[1] but I did not find him there : however, I found La Troche there weeping for her son, and the Countess[2] weeping for her husband. She had a grey hat on, in which, in the excess of her grief, she buried her face ; it was an odd sight. I believe there are very few instances of hats being seen on such occasions ; I think I would for once, at least, have put on a cap or a hood. They both set out this morning, the wife to the family-seat, and the husband to the war. Good heavens, what a war ! it is likely to be the most sanguinary and fatal one that has taken place since the passage of Charles VIII into Italy ; and so the King has been told.

The Issel[3] is defended with twelve hundred pieces of cannon, and 60,000 infantry, besides three towns, and a large river on this side of it. The Count de Guiche, who knows the country, showed us a map of it at Madame de Verneuil's ; it is an astonishing enterprise ; the Prince de Condé is very much occupied with it. The other day a pleasant sort of a

[1] The Count de Lude, Grand Master of the Ordnance.

[2] Renée Elenorele Bouillé, first wife to the Count de Lude, was a great huntress, and dressed on those occasions like a man : she spent the greater part of her life in the country, following the diversions of the field.

[3] According to the Dutch pronunciation, the Scheld.

fellow came to him to say he knew a secret to furnish him with money. "My friend," said he, "I thank thee; but if thou hast any invention by which we may pass the Issel without being knocked on the head, thou wilt oblige me by communicating it, for I know of none." His lieutenants-general were the Marshals d'Humières and de Bellefond, of whom I have some particulars to give which you ought to be informed of. The two armies are to join; the King will command Monsieur,[1] Monsieur the Prince,[2] the Prince M. de Turenne, and de Turenne the two Marshals, and even the army of M. de Créqui. The King mentioned this to the Marshal de Bellefond, and told him that it was his will he should obey M. de Turenne without considering his rank. The Marshal without taking time to reflect of it (this was his fault) replied that he should not be worthy of the honour His Majesty had conferred on him if he disgraced himself by an obedience that had no example. The King, with much good nature, desired him to retract the answer he had made; and told him that he wished it from a feeling of friendship, as his disgrace would be the consequence of his refusal. The marshal replied, that he saw he should lose the happiness of His Majesty's favour, and ruin his own fortune; but this appeared to him more eligible than to forfeit his esteem, and that he could not obey M. de Turenne without dishonouring the dignity to which he had raised him. "Then," said the King, "we must part." The Marshal made a very low bow, and took his leave. M. de Louvois, who does not love him, immediately sent him an order to go to Tours. His name is erased out of the list of the King's Household: he is in debt fifty thousand crowns, more than all his estate is worth: he is utterly ruined, but he is contented. It is believed he will retire to La Trappe. He offered his equipage, which was made at the King's expense, to His Majesty, to be disposed of as he pleased. This was interpreted as a design to affront the King, though nothing could be more innocent. His friends and relations, and all who have any attachment to him, are inconsolable; Madame

[1] The Duke of Orleans, the King's brother.
[2] The Prince de Condé.

de Villars [1] is so likewise. Do not fail to write to her, and to the poor Marshal. The Marshal d'Humières, who was supported by M. de Louvois, had not appeared at Court since, and waited till the Marshal de Créqui had given his answer. He came post from the army to give it himself; he arrived yesterday, and had a conversation of an hour with the King. The Marshal de Grammont was called in, who maintained the rights of the Marshals of France, and desired the King to judge who did the greatest honour to that dignity: they who, to support his grandeur, exposed themselves to the danger of disobliging His Majesty, or he who was ashamed to bear that title, who had effaced it out of every place where it was found, who esteemed the name of Marshal as an injury to him, and who affected to command in quality of a Prince. The end of all this is, that the Marshal de Créqui is gone to his country-house to plant cabbages, as well as Marshal d'Humières.

This is at present the only subject of conversation. It is much disputed whether they did well or ill: their partisans on both sides are warm in the debate. The Countess [2] has talked herself into a sore throat, and the Count de Guiche is so hoarse he cannot speak: the debate between them grew into a perfect comedy; it was necessary to separate them. The truth is, these are three men of great importance in carrying on the war, and it will be difficult to supply their places. The Prince is very much concerned at losing them, thinking the King's interest must suffer by it. M. de Schomberg, having commanded armies in chief, is likewise unwilling to obey M. de Turenne. In a word, France, though it abounds so much in great generals, will scarcely find one who will accept of employment in consequence of this unhappy misunderstanding.

M. d'Aligre has the seals; he is fourscore years of age; they are only deposited with him. He is chosen, like a Pope merely with a view to a quick succession.

I have just been making the tour of the city. I have been with M. de la Rochefoucauld; he is oppressed with grief upon taking leave of his sons; but in the midst of this concern

[1] She was a Bellefond, and was aunt to the Marshal.

[2] Madame de Fiesque, who always went by the name of *the Countess*.

he begs me to say a thousand tender things to you from him. We have had much conversation on this melancholy occasion. All the world is in tears, for their sons, their brothers, their husbands, or their lovers. He must be of a miserably selfish temper who is not deeply interested in the departure, as it were, of the whole kingdom. Dangeau and the Count de Sault [1] came to bid us adieu. They informed us, that the King, instead of setting out to-morrow, as it was believed he would, in order to prevent the effusion of tears, went this morning at ten without letting his intention be known. He had a suite of twelve only with him ; the rest will follow. Instead of going to Villers-Coterets, he is gone to Nanteuil, where it is thought that others who have disappeared of late [2] will meet him. To-morrow he is to go to Soissons, and afterwards will pursue the route that was first resolved on. If you do not think this gallant, you have only to say so. The universal melancholy that reigns there is beyond imagination. The Queen remains in quality of Regent : all the principal companies have been to pay their compliments to her. This is a strange war and begins dismally.

On my return hither I found our good Cardinal, who came to bid me adieu : we talked an hour together : he has written you a little valedictory epistle, and he sets out to-morrow. M. d'Uzès is going away too : who is it that is not leaving Paris ? Alas ! it is only I ; but I shall have my turn as well as others. I approve your Monaco excursion. It is true, as you say, that it is a cruel thing to take a journey of two hundred leagues, and at the end of it to find oneself at Aix ; but this jaunt will suit the delay of my own journey. I shall arrive perhaps at Grignan nearly as soon as you.

I beg, my dearest child, that you will let me hear from you regularly. I am like a lost creature without your letters.

[1] Afterwards Duc de les Diguières.
[2] The Duchess de la Vallière.

LETTER LIV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, May 6, 1672.

My dear child, I must return to narration : it is a folly I can never resist. Prepare, therefore, for a description. I was yesterday at a service performed in honour of the Chancellor Seguier,[1] at the Oratory. Painting, sculpture, music, rhetoric, in a word the four liberal arts were at the expense of it. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the decorations : they were finely imagined, and designed by Le Brun. The mausoleum reached to the top of the dome, adorned with a thousand lamps, and a variety of figures characteristic of him in whose honour it was erected. Beneath were four figures of Death, bearing the marks of his several dignities as having taken away his honours with his life. One of them held his helmet, another his ducal coronet, another the ensigns of his Order, another his Chancellor's mace. The four sister arts, painting, music, eloquence, and sculpture, were represented in deep distress, bewailing the loss of their protector. The first representation was supported by the four virtues, fortitude, temperance, justice, and religion. Above these, four angels, or genii, received the soul of the deceased, and seemed pruning their purple wings to bear their precious charge to heaven. The mausoleum was adorned with a variety of little seraphs, who supported an illuminated shrine, which was fixed to the top of the cupola. Nothing so magnificent or so well imagined was ever seen ; it is Le Brun's masterpiece. The whole church was adorned with pictures, devices, and emblems, which all bore some relation to the life, or office, of the Chancellor ; and some of his noblest actions were represented in painting. Madame de Verneuil [2] offered to purchase all this decoration at a great price ; but it was unanimously resolved

[1] Peter Seguier, who died the 28th of January, 1672.

[2] Charlotte de Seguier, his daughter, married, first, Maximilian de Béthune, Duc de Sully, and secondly, Henry de Bourbon, Duc de Verneuil.

by those who had contributed to it to adorn a gallery with it, and to consecrate it as an everlasting monument of their gratitude and magnificence. The assembly was grand and numerous, but without confusion. I sat next to Monsieur de Tulle,[1] Madame Colbert and the Duke of Monmouth, who is as handsome as when we saw him at the Palais Royal. (Let me tell you in a parenthesis, that he is going to the army to join the King.) A young Father of the Oratory came to speak the funeral oration. I desired Monsieur de Tulle to bid him come down, and to mount the pulpit in his place, since nothing could sustain the beauty of the spectacle, and the excellence of the music, but the force of his eloquence. My child, this young man trembled when he began, and we all trembled with him. Our ears were at first struck with a provincial accent; he is of Marseilles, and is called Lené. But as he recovered from his confusion he became so brilliant, established himself so well, gave so just a measure of praise to the deceased, touched with so much address and delicacy on all the passages in his life where delicacy was required, placed in so true a light all that was most worthy of admiration, employed all the charms of expression, all the masterly strokes of eloquence, with so much propriety and so much grace that everyone present, without exception, burst into applause, charmed with so perfect, so finished a performance. He is twenty-eight years of age, the intimate friend of M. de Tulle, who accompanied him when he left the assembly. We were for naming him the Chevalier Mascaron, and I think he will even surpass his friend. As for the music, it was fine beyond all description. Baptiste[2] exerted himself to the utmost, and was assisted by all the King's musicians. There was an addition made to that fine *Miserere*, and there was a *Libera* which filled the eyes of the whole assembly with tears. I do not think the music in heaven could exceed it. There were several prelates present. I desired Guitant to look for the good Bishop of Marseilles, but we could not see him. I whispered him that if it had been the funeral oration of any

[1] Julius Mascaron, Bishop of Tulle, a celebrated preacher.
[2] Lully.

person living, to whom he might have made his court by it, he would not have failed to have been there. This little pleasantry made us laugh, in spite of the solemnity of the ceremony. My dear child, what a strange letter is this? I fancy I have almost lost my senses! What is this long account to you? To tell you the truth, I have satisfied my love of description.

The King is at Charleroi, and will make a pretty long stay there. There is no forage yet to be found, and his numerous train carries famine with it wherever he goes. They are embarrassed at the outset of the campaign. Guitant showed your letter to me and the Abbé; the burthen of it is very obliging (Envoyez moi ma mère [1]). How amiable you are, my child! and how agreeably do you justify the unbounded affection I bear you! Alas! I think of nothing but my journey; leave the arrangement to me: I will conduct everything; and if my aunt continues to spin out the poor remains of life to any great length, I shall certainly set out; you are the only person in the world who could induce me to leave her in so pitiable a situation. I am every moment thinking of my departure, but have no courage to fix the day. To-day my journey is decided upon; to-morrow I am irresolute. What you say, my dear, is true; there are events in life which are very disobliging. You beg me not to think of you in changing my house, and I beg you to believe that I think of nothing else; and that you are so dear to me that you occupy my whole heart. I shall go to-morrow and sleep in that delightful apartment, where you may be accommodated without displacing me. Adieu, my beautiful love, you are at present a traveller, exposed to the wide world; I fear your adventurous humour. I can neither trust to you, nor to M. de Grignan. It is as you say, a strange thing to find oneself at Aix, after having gone two hundred leagues; and at St. Pilon,[2] after having climbed so high. Your letters sometimes contain very pleasant passages,

[1] Send me my mother.

[2] St. Pilon is a chapel in the form of a dome, built upon the point of the rock of Sainte Baume. It is only to be attained with infinite labour, and by a road cut in the mountain.

but sometimes sentences which escape you, as obscure as those of Tacitus. I stumbled upon this comparison, and it is a very just one. I embrace Grignan, and kiss his right cheek, beneath the little tufted mole.

LETTER LV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, June 17, 1672.
11 *o'clock at night.*

I have just heard a melancholy piece of news, the particulars of which I cannot give you, because I am not yet informed of them ; all I have heard is, that M. de Longueville was killed in crossing the Issel [1] : this is grievous intelligence. I was at Madame de la Fayette's, with M. de la Rochefoucauld, when I first heard it, and was told at the same time that M.de Marsillac was wounded, and that the Chevalier de Marsillac [2] died of his wound. This storm fell on him in my presence ; he was deeply afflicted with it ; his tears flowed from his heart, for his firmness of mind prevented any unmanly expression of grief.

After hearing this, I have not the patience to inquire any farther. I flew to M. de Pomponne's, who reminded me that my son was in the King's army, which had no part in this expedition ; it was reserved for the Prince, who, it is said, is wounded ; it is said, too, that he passed the river in a little boat, that Guitry and Nogent are drowned, M. de la Feuillade and Roquelaure wounded, and that a great number have perished on this fatal occasion. When I know the particulars, I will inform you.

Guitant has just sent a gentleman to me from the Hôtel de Condé ; from him I learn that the Prince was wounded in the hand ; that M. de Longueville [3] forced the barrier

[1] The Rhine it should be, for the Issel was abandoned.

[2] Two sons of M. de la Rochefoucauld.

[3] The Duc de Longueville, heated by wine, spurred on his horse to the very bank of the entrenchment of the enemy ; he then fired his pistol, crying that he would give no quarter. The enemy immediately fired, and killed him upon the spot.

and presented himself the first ; he was also the first that fell, being instantly killed ; the rest differs but little from what I told you above : M. de Guitry and M. de Nogent drowned, M. de Marsillac wounded, and a great many others that are not yet known. But the Issel [Rhine] is crossed. The Prince is represented in the boat giving his orders with the composure and divine courage that characterize him. M. de Marsillac was wounded by a musket-shot in the shoulder, and in the jaw, but the bone is not injured. Adieu, my dear child ; my mind is somewhat disturbed, for though my son is in the King's army, he will have so many opportunities of signalizing himself that I tremble, and die with apprehension.

LETTER LVI

From Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan

Paris, Monday, June 20, 1672.

I cannot reflect upon the situation you have been in without great emotion, and though I know you are out of danger, yet I cannot turn my eyes on what has passed without a horror that distracts me. Alas ! how much was I in the dark about a health that was so dear to me ! If anyone had told me that my daughter was in greater danger than if she had been in the army, how little should I have believed it ! Must I suffer this useless grief in addition to so many other sorrows that afflict my heart ? The extreme danger my son is in ; the war, which rages every day with greater violence ; the couriers, who bring no other news but the death of some friend or acquaintance, and may bring accounts still more fatal; the fear of hearing ill news, and yet the curiosity to know it ; the desolation of those who are in excess of grief, and with whom I pass a great part of my time ; the strange state of health my aunt is in, and my extreme desire of seeing you ; all this afflicts and consumes me, and forces me to lead a life so contrary to my inclination, that I have need of more than a common share of health to support it.

You have never seen Paris as it is at present ; all the world is in tears, or fears to be so. Poor Madame de Nogent is almost beside herself. Madame de Longueville pierces every heart with her complaints. I have not seen her indeed, but this is what I am told. Mademoiselle de Vertus returned two days since from Port Royal, where she resides. They sent for her and M. Arnauld to impart to Madame de Longueville the terrible news. The very sight of Mademoiselle de Vertus was sufficient ; her sudden return was too sure a sign that some fatal accident had happened. As soon, therefore, as she appeared —" Ah ! Mademoiselle, how is it with my brother ? " [1] She did not dare, even in thought, to inquire farther. " Madam, he is recovered of his wound—there has been a battle—" " And my son ? " No answer was made. " Ah ! Mademoiselle, my son, my dear child ! answer me ; is he dead ? "—" I have no words to answer you, Madam."—" Oh, my dear son ! Was he killed on the spot ? Had he not a single moment ? Oh, God ! what a sacrifice is this ! " And she threw herself upon the bed, and by expressions of the most lively sorrow, by fainting fits, by convulsions, by the silence of despair, by stifled cries, by sudden bursts of passion, by floods of bitter tears, by eyes up-lifted to Heaven, and by heart-rending complaints, she exhibited all the various emotions of grief. She sees a few friends ; and in pure submission to Providence consents to receive such nourishment as is just sufficient to keep life and soul together. She takes no rest ; her health, before in a declining state, is visibly altered for the worse. For my part, I wish her death earnestly, as I cannot think she can survive such a loss. There is a certain gentleman [2] who is scarcely less affected ; I cannot help thinking that if they had met, in the first moments of their grief, and had been alone together, all other sentiments would have given place to sighs and tears, redoubled without intermission ; there would have been a dumb scene of sorrow, a dialogue of inarticulate sighs and groans. This is a mere thought of my own. But, my dear, how great affliction is this ! The very mistresses of

[1] The Prince de Condé.
[2] M. de la Rochefoucauld.

poor de Longueville do not constrain themselves ; his domestics are disconsolate ; and his gentlemen, who came yesterday with the ill news, scarcely appears a reasonable creature. This death effaces the thoughts of all others.

A courier, who arrived yesterday evening, brings an account of the death of the Count du Plessis,[1] who was killed by a cannon-shot, as he was giving directions for making a bridge. Arnheim is besieged by M. de Turenne. They did not attack the fort of Skeing, as it was defended by eight thousand men. Alas ! these successful beginnings will be followed with a tragical end for a great number of families. May Heaven preserve my poor son ! He was not upon this expedition ; but the campaign is not yet finished.

In the midst of our affiictions, the description you have given me of Madame Colonna and her sister,[2] is really divine ; it rouses one under the most melancholy circumstances : it is an admirable picture. The Countess de Soissons and Madame de Bouillon [3] are quite in a rage with these fools, and say they ought to be confined. It is thought that the King will not disoblige the constable [4] (Colonna), who is certainly one of the greatest men in Rome. In the meantime we are in expectation of seeing them arrive here like Mademoiselle de l'Etoile [5] : this comparison is good.

The accounts I send you are from the best authority ; you will find by all you receive that M. de Longueville has been the cause of his own death, as well as of the death of many others ; and that the Prince has shown himself through the whole of this expedition more like a father than the general of an army. I said yesterday, and others agreed with me, that if the war continues, the Duke [6] will certainly occasion the death of the Prince ; his love for him surpasses every other consideration.

[1] Alexandre de Choiseul, Count du Plessis, son of Cæsar de Choiseul, Marshal of France.

[2] Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin.

[3] Sisters to Mesdames de Colonna and Mazarin.

[4] The husband of Madame Colonna, and head of one of the most powerful families in Rome.

[5] In Scarron's comic romance.

[6] Henri Juliers de Bourbon, son of the Prince.

La Marans affects to appear overwhelmed with grief. She says that she sees very plainly there is something in the news from the army, which is concealed from her ; and that the Prince, and the Duke, are dead, as well as M. de Longueville. She conjures people by all that is sacred to speak out, and not to spare her ; and tells them that in her deplorable situation it is in vain to hide anything from her. If it were possible for us to laugh under these circumstances, we should laugh at her. Alas ! if she knew how little any of us think of concealing anything from her, and how much everyone is taken up with his own griefs and his own fears, she would not have the vanity to believe we paid so much attention to her as to deceive her.

The news I send you comes as I before said, from good authority ; I had it from Gourville, who was with Madame de Longueville when she heard of her son's death. All the couriers come straight to him. M. de Longueville had made his will before he set out. He leaves a great part of his property to a son he has, who, as I believe, will take the title of Chevalier d'Orléans,[1] without expense to his relations. Have you heard how the body of M. de Longueville was disposed of ? It was laid in the same boat in which he passed the river two hours before. The Prince, who was wounded, ordered him to be placed near him, covered with a cloak, and, with several others who were wounded, repassed the Rhine to a town on this side the river, where they came to have their wounds dressed : it was the most melancholy sight in the world. They say the Chevalier de Monchevreuil, who was attached to M. de Longueville, will not have a wound dressed which he received as he stood next to him.

I have received a letter from my son ; he is very much grieved at the death of M. de Longueville. He was not in this expedition, but he is to be in another. What safety can be hoped for in such a profession ? I advise you to write to M. de la Rochefoucauld, on the death of the Chevalier,

[1] He appeared under the name of the Chevalier de Longueville, and was accidentally killed at Philippsburg in 1688 by a soldier, who was shooting at a snipe.

and the wound of M. de Marsillac. This fatal event has given me an opportunity of seeing his heart without disguise : for constancy, worth, tenderness, and good sense, he infinitely surpasses anyone I have ever met with ; his wit and humour are nothing in comparison. I will not amuse myself at present with telling you how much I love you. I embrace M. de Grignan, and the coadjutor.

The same evening at 10 *o'clock.*

I made up my packet two hours ago, and on my return to town, I found a letter for me, with the news that a peace was concluded with Holland. It may easily be imagined that the Dutch are in the greatest consternation, and glad to submit to any terms ; the King's success is beyond all that has ever been known. We shall once more breathe again : but what a cruel addition must this be to the grief of Madame de Longueville, and all those who have lost children and near relations ! I have seen Marshal du Plessis ; he is greatly afflicted, but demeans himself like a brave soldier. His lady [1] weeps bitterly ; the Countess [2] is only disconcerted at not being a duchess. I think my dear child, that if it had not been for the rashness of M. de Longueville, we should have gained Holland without losing a man.

LETTER LVII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, July 1, 1672.

At length, my child, our dear aunt's sufferings are at an end. She has cost us many tears. I, who am so easily affected, have in particular wept profusely. She was found dead in her bed at five o'clock yesterday morning. The preceding evening she was extremely ill, and would get up from restlessness ; but she was so weak that she could not sit in her

[1] Columba de Charron.
[2] Marie Louise le Loup de Bellenave.

chair, and kept sinking down and falling out of it, so that she was obliged to be supported. Mademoiselle de la Trousse flattered herself that this weakness proceeded only from want of sustenance : her mouth was convulsed ; my cousin said the milk she had taken had merely made her mouth uncomfortable ; for my part, I believed her dying. At eleven o'clock she made a sign to me to leave her : I kissed her hand, she gave me her blessing, and I quitted the apartment. She then took a little milk to oblige Mademoiselle de la Trousse, but could not swallow it. They laid her in the bed ; she made everyone leave the room, saying she was going to sleep. About four in the morning word was brought to Mademoiselle de la Trousse that madame was asleep ; upon which she ordered her not to be disturbed upon any account. At five she said she would go and see if she was still asleep : they went to the bedside, and found her dead. Upon which a melancholy scene ensued ! It was with difficulty they could disengage her daughter from the corpse : however, they contrived to carry her into another room. They next came to acquaint me ; I immediately ran thither in great agitation, and found my poor aunt cold and stiff, but laid so much at her ease, that I do not think she had for six months experienced so tranquil a moment as that in which she expired : she was not at all changed. I kneeled by her, and when I had paid my tribute of tears to this mournful sight, I went in quest of Mademoiselle de la Trousse, whom I found in a situation that might have melted the very stones. I brought her hither with me, and in the evening Mademoiselle de la Trousse came and took my cousin home with her, from whence she proposes removing her to the family-seat, till the return of M. de la Trousse. I am now ready to set out, having no longer anything to detain me ; and so, my dear, farewell.

I have been promised some news, I am in expectation of it : it seems the King continues the chain of his conquests. But you take no notice of the death of M. de Longueville, nor of the pains I have taken to supply you with intelligence : not a word about my letters ! In short, I fancy I am writing to one deaf and dumb. But I see how it is ; I must absolutely

come to Grignan ; your patience is worn threadbare. Our Abbé sends you a thousand good wishes ; I perfectly adore him for his noble perseverance in making the journey to Provence.

LETTER LVIII

To the Same

From Marseilles, Wednesday, ——, 1672.

I sit down to write to you, my dear, after having had a visit from the intendant's lady, and a very beautiful harangue. I am now expecting a present, and the present expects my pistole. I am enchanted with the singular beauty of this place. Yesterday was a heavenly day, and the spot [1] from whence I had a view of the sea, the bastides, the hills, and the town itself, surpass everything I have ever seen. But what delights me more than all the rest, is Madame de Montfuron [2] : she is really a charming woman, and it is impossible not to love her. A crowd of chevaliers came here to receive M. de Grignan [3] at his arrival ; names that were known, and names that were unknown ; knights-errant, long swords, smart cocked hats, a spice of war, of romance, of embarkations, disembarkations, adventures, chains, slavery, captivity, and captives ; all this, to one of so romantic a turn as I am, is inexpressibly delightful. M. de Marseilles paid us a visit yesterday evening, and to-day we are to dine with him. I tell you the affair is as good as done. The weather is so very bad at present, it makes me dull, we can see neither the sea, the galleys, nor the harbour. With all due respect to Aix, Marseilles is a very charming town, and more populous than Paris : it has, at least, a hundred

[1] This place is called La Vista, and is greatly admired for the beauty of its prospect.

[2] Marie de Pontevez de Buous, wife of Léone de Valbelle, Marquis de Montfuron, and first cousin to M. de Grignan.

[3] M. de Grignan had come thus far to meet his mother-in-law, and conduct her to Grignan.

thousand inhabitants ; how many beauties there are I cannot pretend to tell, for I have neither time nor leisure for the calculation. The air in general is thick, so that, upon the whole, I had rather be with you. No place can please without you; and Provence surely less than any other. Thank God that you possess more courage than I do ; but do not despise me for my weakness, nor laugh at my chains.

LETTER *LIX

From Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy

Grignan, August 27, 1673.

I am very glad, my dear cousin, that you are at Paris. This appears to me to be the road to preferment, and I have never wished anyone so much to obtain great honours as I wished them to you, when you were in the way of Fortune. She is so fantastic, that there is nothing we may not expect from her caprice ; so I always live in hope. You have so much philosophy, that I shall some day ask you to impart a small portion to me, to help me to bear your misfortunes, and my own vexations. I comfort myself for not seeing you at Bourbilly, with the idea that we shall meet at Paris. I wish my daughter could pay her respects to you there herself, but as this is uncertain, she desires me to do it here, and so does M. de Grignan.

LETTER LX

From Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan

Montelimart, Thursday, October 5,[1] 1673.

This is a dreadful day, my dear child ; I own I can scarcely support it. I have left you in a situation that adds to my

[1] This was the day on which Madame de Sévigné left Grignan to set out for Paris, as did Madame de Grignan at the same time on her journey to Salons and Aix. Montelimart is only three or four leagues from the family seat of Grignan.

sorrow. I think of every step I take, and every one you take ; and that were we to continue travelling in this way, we should never meet again. My heart is truly at rest when I am near you : it is then in its natural state and the only one in which it takes pleasure. What passed this morning has given me the most poignant uneasiness, and caused tumult within me, which your philosophy will not be at a loss to account for. I have felt, and shall long feel it. My heart and mind are full of you ; I cannot think of you without weeping, and I think of you incessantly. This state is not to be borne : as it is extreme, I hope its violence will destroy it. I seek you continually, and I seem to have lost everything in losing you. My eyes, that have so often for these fourteen months dwelt on you with delight, no longer behold you ; the endearing time I have passed, renders the present more painful, till I am a little accustomed to it, but I shall never be sufficiently accustomed to it not to desire ardently to see and embrace you again. I have no reason to hope more from the future than the past. I know what I have already suffered by your absence ; and I shall now be still more to be pitied, since I have imprudently made your presence necessary to me. It seems to me as if I did not embrace you sufficiently at parting ; what was there to hinder me from doing it ? I did not tell you how satisfied I am with your affection. I did not recommend you enough to M. de Grignan ; I did not thank him sufficiently for all his attentions and kindness to me ; but I expect that he will continue to give me proofs of it on every occasion : there is one in which his own interest is more concerned than mine, and yet I am the person most affected by it.

I already begin to be devoured with expectation. I hope for no consolation but from your letters ; and yet I know they will only make me sigh still more deeply. In short, my dear child, I live but for you. Would I loved God with equal fervour ! I am continually thinking of the pigeons. I am made up of Grignans, and all that belongs to them. Never was journey so dull and melancholy as ours, not a word passes. Adieu, my dear child, pity me for being thus torn from you ! Alas ! here we are again at our letter-writing ! Assure the

archbishop of my tenderest respect, and embrace the coadjutor for me : I recommend you to his care. We have dined once more at your expense. But here comes M. de Saint Géniéz to comfort me.

LETTER LXI

To the Same

Bourbilly, Monday, October 16, 1673.

At length, my dear child, I am arrived at the old mansion of my forefathers. I have found my beautiful meadows, my little river, and the pretty mill, in the same places where I left them. These walls have afforded pleasure to better people than myself, and yet I am almost dead with grief, when I think of having left Grignan to come here : I could now weep heartily, if I were to give way to my sorrow ; but I follow your advice, and endeavour to get the better of it. I have seen you here, my dear child, with Bussy, who used to amuse us so highly. Here it was that you called me *mother-in-law*, with such a pretty air. They have lopped the trees before the gate, which has made the walk up to the house very pleasant. We abound in corn here, but no money. It rains in torrents. I have been so little accustomed to these storms of late, that I am really angry at them. M. de Guitant is at Epoises : he is continually sending here, to know when I shall arrive, that he may come and fetch me. But that is not the way to do business. I shall pay him a visit, and you may judge that the conversation will turn upon you ; I desire you will make yourself quite easy about what I shall say to him ; I am not very imprudent ; you shall hear from us both. I cannot dispense with seeing you ; if you really love me, you will give me a proof of it this year. Adieu, my dear child, I am but this moment arrived, and am rather fatigued ; when I am a little settled, I will write to you again.

LETTER LXII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, November 13, 1673.

I love you too well, my dear child, to be happy here without you. Alas! I have brought Provence and all your affairs along with me; *in van si fugge, quel che nel cor si porta.*[1] I am a proof of this, for I do nothing but languish after you perpetually. I cannot bring myself to a proper resignation to the will of Providence, in the disposition he has made with respect to us; never surely did anyone stand so much in need of the aid of religion as I do, but, my child, let us talk about our affairs. I had written to M. de Pomponne as you desired me; and as I had not sent my letter, and thought it a pretty good one, I showed it to Mademoiselle de Méri to gratify my vanity. I have dined with the Abbé de Grignan and La Garde; after dinner, we went to d'Hacqueville's; we talked a great deal, and as they have the best judgment in the world, and as I never do anything without them, I am never deficient. They think there never was a journey more necessary than M. de Grignan's. You will say, But how is leave of absence to be obtained, now war is declared? I shall answer that it is more declared in the gazettes than here: in this country everything is suspended. We expect something, but we know not what: the assembly of Cologne, however, is not yet broken up, and M. de Chaulnes, by what I hear to-day, will not hold our States, but M. de Lavardin, who arrived yesterday, and sets out on Monday with M. Boucherat: this gives reason to hope that some negotiation is going forward. Not a word is said here of war; we shall, however, soon see: you must always hold yourself in readiness: do nothing which may break the neck of your journey, and confide in your friends, who would not wish you to ask leave of absence unseasonably; they do not approve of your sending an Ambassador; yourself, or nobody. When you are here, things will wear a different

[1] In vain we fly from what we bear in our heart.

aspect from what they do in Provence. Good heavens, my dear child, if there were only this reason, come for your health's sake, come that you may not be destroyed, come and *cook* other thoughts, come and resume your consequence, and put a stop to the injustice that has been done you. If it were I alone who held this language, I should advise you not to attend to it ; but the persons who give you this counsel are not easily corrupted, and are not accustomed to flatter me.

The Abbé de Grignan, La Garde, and I, have been to pay a visit to your first President [1] ; he is returned from Orleans. He kissed the King's hand the day before yesterday, when His Majesty told him that he would have strange turbulent spirits to deal with in Provence. He is a man that will restore a good understanding on all sides ; he is a man, in short, that —. I am vexed to think that you have yet received none of my letters but those which I wrote upon the road. Heavens, shall I never hear your voice again ? Alas ? My dear child, what a distance is there between my fireside and yours ! How happy was I when with you ! I felt my joy in its full extent, and have nothing to upbraid myself with ; I made the most of my time, and kept my pleasure till the last moment.

The Queen has desired *Quantova* [2] to let her have to attend her one of her Spanish women that was not yet gone : this she readily granted ; and it has so delighted the Queen, that she declares she shall never forget the obligation. I am surprised that Madame de Monaco has not yet sent me any compliments on your account. I have received a great many visits and civilities from Versailles. My son is in excellent health. M. de Turenne is still in my son's army. They are at Philippsburg, the imperialists are very strong ; you know, I suppose, that they have thrown a bridge across the Maine ; I found poor Guitant agitated to death at this intelligence : I told him that nothing would have prevailed on me to have quitted Provence, but the dislike I had to hearing second-hand news, and not being able to see things with my own eyes. The Abbé Têtu is very fond of Madame de Coulanges, but

[1] M. Marin, then just nominated to the chair in the Parliament of Aix.
[2] Madame de Montespan.

only till you return, he says ; I sup almoſt every night with her. M. de Coulanges's cabinet is more beautiful than it ever was ; your little pictures are in their full luſtre, and very properly disposed. Every one here entertains the moſt respectful and friendly, I had almoſt said tender, remembrance of you ; but this latter sentiment ought not to be so general. I embrace M. de Grignan, and wish him all possible happiness. Brancas and M. de Caumartin are here ; the former embraces you : the latter does not embrace you ; but he has juſt had an admirable conversation with the worthy M. Marin,[1] to give his son inſtructions with regard to the behaviour he is to observe towards M. de Grignan.

LETTER LXIII

To the Same

Paris, Monday, November 27, 1673.

Your letter, my dear, appears to be written in the ſtyle of a conqueror ; you had found your account when you wrote, you had gained all your causes. Your enemies seemed confounded ; you saw your husband go forth at the head of the sacred banner,[2] and you breathed nothing but success from the Orange expedition. The sun of Provence dissipates, at leaſt in its meridian, the moſt gloomy vapours ; in short, your humour shone forth in every line of your letter. May Heaven preserve you long in this happy disposition ! You are not to be blamed for seeing things in this light where you are ; nor are we for viewing them here in a different one. You think the advantage is on your side ; we wish it as ardently as you can do, and in that case are equally againſt an accommodation ; but supposing money, which is the ruling god in

[1] M. Marin was lively and witty. He was once in the library of a man well known to be of Jewish extraction. He remarked on the back of his books, coats of arms, to which, like many others who bear them, he was not entitled. "What do I see there ?" said he. "My arms," replied the other. "I thought," resumed the President, "they were Hebrew characters."

[2] Alluding to an expression in Tasso's *Jerusalem.*

all these things, should deceive you in your reckoning, you will then, I fancy, agree with us in owning that we should embrace any expedient. You see we do not always think alike, on account of the distance that separates us ; distance indeed ! this it is too that prevents us from hearing what is said upon the subject. We must, however, believe that each party speaks as he thinks : if you were here, you would say as we do ; and if we were there, we should think as you do.

Many people are curious to know how you will get out of the affair of the syndicship. Believe me, the loss of that little battle will have a different effect here to what it will in Provence. We let slip no opportunity of saying all that should be said relative to M. de Grignan's expenses, the great zeal he shows for His Majesty's service, and how much he is beloved in his province : we forget nothing : and for natural tones, choice, and flow of words, I may say without vanity, that we will not yield to those who pay visits in the morning by torch-light. But as a truce is talked of, and as M. de la Garde thinks your presence necessary, be perfectly easy respecting the conduct of those who know how and when to ask leave of absence for you. I can easily comprehend the expenses of this siege : I admire the inventions of the demon to make you throw away money : I am more vexed than any other person ; for besides the reasons that render your presence necessary, I have one in particular that makes me impatient for you to come this year. The Abbé is desirous of settling accounts with me, relating to my guardianship ; now this can be done only in the presence of all the parties. My son will be here, if you will come : judge then of the pleasure you will give me in doing it. Besides, it would be imprudent to delay an affair of such importance. The Abbé is old and infirm, and may die suddenly, in which case I shall not know how to act for myself and shall be exposed to all the chicanery of the Bretons. I shall say no more : judge of my interest, and of the great desire I have to be quit of so important a charge. You will have time enough to conclude your assembly ; after which I must entreat this mark of your esteem, that I may die in peace. I leave your own kind heart to meditate upon this.

The Queen dismissed all her women yesterday : no one knows why. It is imagined she wanted to get rid of one in particular, and that, to make no distinction, she parted with all. Madame de Coëtlogon [1] is with Madame de Richelieu ; La Mothe [2] with the Maréchale ; La Mark [3] with Madame de Crussol ; Ludre and Dampiere [4] return to Madame ; de Rouvrai is with her mother, who has taken her home with her ; Lannoi [5] is going to be married, and seems quite happy ; and as for Théobon,[6] I fancy she will not remain on hand. This is all I know of the affair at present.

The Abbé Têtu is very well pleased with what you say to him through me : we often sup together. You stand exceedingly well with the Archbishop of Rheims : Madame de Coulanges is not quite on such a good footing with the brother [7] of that prelate, so you may look upon that channel as stopped up. Brancas is quite in your interest ; and you are beloved by Madame de Villars. La Garde and I have at length seen your first President ; he is a very well-made man, and of a pleasing countenance. Besons says, he would make an excellent bull-dog if he wished to bite. He received us with great civility ; we presented your and M. de Grignan's compliments to him. Some people say he will be a turn-coat, and love you better than the Bishop. *Le flux les amena, le reflux les emmene.*[8] Did I inform you that the Chevalier de Buous [9] was here ? he is just come from Brest, and in his way passed through Vitré, where he had an admirable conversation with Rahuet ; he asked who M. de Grignan was, and who I was. Rahuet made answer, that M. de Grignan was a man of distinction, and the principal person in Provence, but that it was at an immense distance ; and that Madame (meaning me)

[1] Afterwards the Marchioness de Cavoie.
[2] Afterwards Duchess de la Ferté.
[3] Afterwards Countess de Lannion.
[4] Afterwards Countess de Morcuil.
[5] Afterwards Marchioness de Montrevel.
[6] Afterwards Countess de Beuvron.
[7] M. de Louvois, Minister of War.
[8] The tide of fortune brought them in, the ebb will carry them back.
[9] Captain of a man-of-war, and first cousin to M. de Grignan.

would have done much better to have married her daughter a little nearer to Rennes. The Chevalier was highly diverted with this account of the family. Adieu, my dearest child ; I am wholly yours. This is a truth nearly akin to that of two and two make four.

LETTER LXIV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, December 4, 1673.

I am at length relieved by having the siege of Orange taken off my mind ; it was an additional load to the burden that oppresses me. Nothing now remains but the syndical war ; I wish it was over. I suppose you will not delay entering upon it, now the little battle of Orange is gained. You cannot think what eagerness there was to be informed of the success of this curious siege. It was talked of in the first rank of news. I embrace the conqueror of Orange, but shall make him no other compliment than that of assuring him that it is with real joy I find this little adventure has taken so happy a turn : I heartily wish he may meet with the same success in all he undertakes, and embrace him with my whole heart. The attachment of the nobility to him is truly delightful : few persons could boast so numerous a train at so short a warning. M. de la Garde is just set out to know what is said of the conquest of Orange : he is loaded with our instructions, and with good sense and affection for us. D'Hacqueville sends me word that he would advise M. de Grignan to write to the King ; I wish this letter was, by virtue of magic, already in the hands of M. de Pomponne or M. de la Garde, for I am afraid lest it should not come at a favourable time. The business of the syndicship has taken possession of my brain, since the siege of Orange has left it.

We supped again yesterday with Madame de Scarron and the Abbé Têtu, at Madame de Coulanges'. We had a great deal of chat, in which you had your share. We took into

our heads to conduct Madame de Scarron home, at midnight, to the very farthest end of the Faubourg St. Germain, a great way beyond Madame de la Fayette's, almost as far as Vaugirard, and quite in the country, where she lives, in a large handsome house,[1] the entrance of which is forbidden to everyone, with a large garden, and beautiful and spacious apartments. She has an equipage, servants, and a genteel table ; dresses neatly, but elegantly in the style of a woman who associates with people of rank : she is amiable, handsome, good, free from affection, and, in a word, an excellent companion. We returned very merrily in the midst of a number of flambeaux, and in full security from thieves.

Madame d'Heudicourt[2] is gone to pay her court. It is a long time since she was seen in this part of the world. Everyone thinks, that if she were not with child, she would soon resume her former familiarities ; and it is therefore imagined that Madame Scarron has no longer so great a resentment against her as formerly. Her return, however, was brought about by other people, and is merely tolerated. The little d'Heudicourt[3] is as handsome as an angel ; she has been of her own head at Court for this week past, and always keeps close to the King ; this little creature enlivens everyone by her presence : she is the prettiest piece of coquetry that ever was seen—she is but five years old, yet she knows as much of the Court as those who have been there all their lives.

Someone told the Dauphin the other day, that there was a man in Paris, who had lately exhibited an extraordinary piece of workmanship, which was a little cart drawn by fleas : the Dauphin, turning to the Prince of Conti, said, "Who do you think, cousin, made the harness?"—"Oh," replied the Prince, "some spider of the neighbourhood." Was not this good? The Queen's maids still continue dispersed, it is said they intend to make ladies of the palace, of the bedchamber, and of the table, serve instead of maids of honour.

[1] The house in which the King's children by Madame de Montespan were brought up under the care of Madame de Scarron, their governess.

[2] Bonne de Pons, Marchioness d'Heudicourt.

[3] Afterwards the Marchioness de Montjou.

The whole, however, will be reduced to four of the palace, which will be the Princess d'Harcourt, Madame de Soubise, Madame de Bouillon, and Madame de Rochefort ; but nothing is certain yet. Adieu, my dear child. I would have confessed yesterday, but a very able and good man refused me absolution, on account of my enmity to the Bishop : if your confessors do not treat you in the same way, they are ignorant people, and know nothing of their duty.

Madame de Coulanges embraces you. She wished to write to you to-day ; she continues to render you all the service in her power, and suffers no opportunity to pass unimproved. She is heartily rejoiced at the taking of Orange. She goes now and then to Court, but never without saying something handsome of you.

LETTER LXV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, December 8, 1673.

I must begin, my dear child, by telling you of the death of the Count de Guiche : this is the chief subject of conversation at present. The poor youth died of sickness and fatigue in M. de Turenne's army ; the news came on Tuesday morning. Father Bourdaloüe went to acquaint the Marshal de Grammont with it ; who feared it the moment he saw him, knowing the declining state of his son. He made everyone go out of his chamber, which was a little apartment near the convent of the Capuchins, and as soon as he found himself alone with Bourdaloüe, he threw himself upon his neck saying, that he guessed but too well what he had to tell him; that it was his death-stroke, and that he received it as such from the hand of God ; that he lost the true, the only object of his tenderness and natural affection ; that he had never experienced any real joy, or violent grief, but through his son, who was not a common character. He threw himself on a bed, unable

to support his grief, but without weeping, for this is a situation that denies the relief of tears. Bourdaloüe wept, but had not yet spoken a word. At last he began to comfort him with religious discourse, in which he employed his well-known zeal and eloquence. They were six hours together ; after which Bourdaloüe, to induce him to make a complete sacrifice, led him to the church of these good Capuchins, where vigils were said for his son. He entered the church fainting and trembling, supported more by the crowd that pressed round him on every side, than by his feet ; his face was so much disfigured with grief, that he could scarcely be known. The Duke saw him in this lamentable condition, and related it to us at Madame de la Fayette's with tears. The poor Marshal returned at last to his little apartment, where he remains like a man under sentence of death. The King has written to him. No one is admitted to see him. Madame de Monaco [1] is inconsolable, and refuses to see company. Madame de Louvigny [2] is likewise incapable of receiving comfort ; but it is only because she is not at all grieved. Do not you wonder at her good fortune ? She is in a moment become Duchess of Grammont. The Chancellor's lady [3] is transported with joy : the Countess de Guiche [4] behaves admirably well ; she weeps when they tell her all the kind things her husband said, and the excuses he made to her when he was dying. " He was a very amiable man," she says ; " I should have loved him passionately, if he had loved me in the slightest degree ; I suffered his contempt with grief, and his death affects me with pity ; I always hoped he would change his sentiments with regard to me." This is certainly true ; there is not the least fiction in it. Madame de Verneuil [5] feels real concern on this occasion. I believe it will be sufficient if you only desire me to make your compliments to her ; so

[1] Catherine Charlotte de Grammont, sister to the Count de Guiche.

[2] Marie Charlotte de Castelnau, sister-in-law to the Count.

[3] Relict of the late Chancellor Seguier, and grandmother to the Countess de Guiche.

[4] Margaret Louise Suzanne de Béthune Sully.

[5] Charlotte de Seguier, mother to the Countess de Guiche ; she first married the Duke de Sully, and afterwards Henry de Bourbon Duke de Verneuil.

you need only write to the Countess de Guiche, to Madame de Monaco, and Madame de Louvigny. The good d'Hacqueville has been desired to go to Frasé, thirty leagues from hence, to tell the news to Madame de Grammont, and to carry her a letter written by the poor youth a little before he died. He made a full confession of the faults of his past life, asked pardon publicly, and sent to tell Vardes, a great many things which may benefit him. In a word, he ended the comedy well, and has left a rich and a happy widow.[1] The Chancellor's lady is so fully sensible, she says, of the little happiness this poor lady must have had in her marriage, that she thinks of nothing but repairing this misfortune. We are at a loss for a proper match for her. You will perhaps name for her M. de Marsillac, as we did ; but they do not like each other : the other Dukes are too young. M. de Foix is destined for Mademoiselle de Roquelaure. Think a little for us, for the affair is pressing. I have sent you, my dear child, a tedious account, but you sometimes tell me you like minuteness.

The Orange business sounds well here for M. de Grignan. The great number of the nobility that followed him solely on account of their attachment to him, the vast expense, and happy termination, are a great honour to M. de Grignan, and a great joy to his friends, who are not inconsiderable here : this general approbation is very gratifying. The King said at supper, "Orange is taken ; Grignan has seven hundred gentlemen with him ; they fired from within the walls and the third day they surrendered. I am very well pleased with Grignan." This was repeated to me ; La Garde can recite it with greater exactness.

As for your Archbishop of Rheims, I do not know what to make of him. La Garde mentioned to him the expense. "This is always the story," said he ; "people love to complain."—"But, sir," said La Garde, "M. de Grignan could

[1] She was married afterwards to the Duke de Lude, in 1688. The Count de Guiche had been the lover of Henrietta of England. He also entered into the intrigues of M. de Vardes. He had made a brilliant campaign in Poland and to him was owed the passage of the Rhine. He was as handsome and witty as he was brave.

not avoid being at a great expenſe, conſidering the number of gentlemen who aſſembled for his ſake."—"You ſhould ſay, for the ſervice of the King."—"That is true, ſir," ſaid he, "but it was all voluntary; their deſign was to oblige M. de Grignan by ſerving the King."—But, my dear, this is nothing: you know he is in other reſpects a good friend; but theſe are days when the ſpleen prevails, and thoſe days are unlucky. Say nothing to me againſt your letters. We ſometimes think our letters are bad becauſe we have a thouſand confuſed ideas: but this confuſion is in the head, while the letter is clear and natural: this is the character of yours, and they are ſometimes ſo entertaining, that thoſe to whom I do the honour of ſhowing them are quite delighted.

I have news from our States of Brittany. The Marquis de Coëtquen has thought fit to attack M. d'Harrouïs; he was pleaſed to ſay that he alone was rich, while all Brittany was oppreſſed with poverty; and that he knew perſons much fitter to fill that poſt than he. M. Boucherat, M. de Lavardin, and the whole province, were ready to ſtone him; they were perfectly ſtruck with horror at his ingratitude, for he owes a thouſand obligations to M. d'Harrouïs. In conſequence of this, he has received a letter from M. de Rohan, ordering him to go to Paris, for that M. de Chaulnes was commiſſioned to forbid him to be preſent at the States: ſo he diſappeared the evening before the Governor arrived; and he remains in diſgrace there for his wicked accuſation againſt M. d'Harrouïs. This, my dear, is what your title of Governor's lady of Brittany obliges me to inform you of.

I have juſt ſeen M. de Pomponne: he was alone. I was two hours with him and Mademoiſelle Lavocat, who is very pretty: we read ſome of your letters with pleaſure. You are admired both for your ſtyle, and the intereſt you take in certain affairs. M. de Pomponne eaſily underſtood what it was we deſired of him. Were I to tell you the many handſome and obliging things that were ſaid of you, and the delightful converſations I have had with this Miniſter, not all the paper in my deſk would ſuffice. I am perfectly ſatisfied with him, and I deſire you to be ſo upon my account of him; he will

be much pleased to see you, and depends much upon your return. Adieu, my dear child ; I expect your brother every day ; and I wish for letters from you every hour.

LETTER LXVI

To the Same

Paris, Monday, December 11, 1673.

I am just returned from St. Germain, where I have been two whole days with Madame de Coulanges at M. de la Rochefoucauld's. In the evening we went to pay our court to the Queen, who said a thousand obliging things to me of you : but if I were to enumerate all the how-d'ye-do's and compliments that I had, both from men and women, old and young, who crowd about me to inquire after you, I should have to name the whole Court. " And how does Madame de Grignan do ? and when will she return ? " and so on. In short, only picture me to yourself, in the midst of a crowd of idle people, who, having nothing else to do, would every one ask me some question, so that I was frequently obliged to answer twenty at once. I dined with Madame de Louvois : it was who should be the first to invite me. I would have returned yesterday, but we were stopped by force to sup with M. de Marsillac, in his enchanted apartments, with Madame de Thianges, Madame Scarron, the Duke, M. de la Rochefoucauld, M. de Vivonne, and a band of heavenly music. This morning, with much ado, we got away.

A quarrel of a singular nature is the news of the day at St. Germain. The Chevalier de Vendôme, and M. de Vivonne, are the humble servants of Madame de Ludre. The Chevalier expressed a wish of compelling M. de Vivonne to resign his pretensions. But on what grounds ? he was asked. Why, he would fight M. de Vivonne. They laughed at him. It was, however, no joke, he said ; he would fight him : and he mounted his horse to take the field. But the

best of the story was Vivonne's reply to the person who brought him the challenge. He was confined to his room by a wound in his arm, and receiving the condolence of the whole Court, ignorant of the threat of his rival. "I, gentlemen," said he, "I fight! He may fight if he pleases, but I defy him to make me fight. Let him get his shoulder broken, let the surgeon make twenty incisions in his arm, and then"—it was thought he was going to say, *we will fight*—"and then," said he, "perhaps we may be friends. But the man must be jesting to think of firing at me! A pretty project truly! he might as well fire at the door of a house.[1] I repent, however, having saved his life in crossing the Rhine, and will do no more such generous actions till I have the nativity cast of those I intend to assist. Would anyone have thought, when I was remounting this fellow on his horse, that a few weeks afterwards he would want to shoot me through the head for my kindness?" This speech, from the tone and manner in which it was delivered, had so droll an effect that nothing else is talked of at St. Germain.

I found your siege of Orange very much magnified at Court; the King had spoken of it very agreeably, and it was thought highly honourable to M. de Grignan, that without the King's order, and merely to follow him, seven hundred gentlemen should have assembled upon the occasion; for the King having said *seven hundred*, everyone else said *seven hundred*: it was added with a laugh, that two hundred litters also followed him; but it is thought, seriously, that few Governors could have obtained such a retinue.

I have had two hours' conversation at two different times with M. de Pomponne. He exceeds my most sanguine hopes. Mademoiselle Lavocat is in our confidence: she is a very amiable girl. She knows all our affairs—the business of the syndic, of the procurator, our gratuity, opposition, deliberation, etc., as well as she does the map of the empire, and the interest of Princes; that is, she has them at her finger's end: we call her the *little minister*. We have interludes in our conversations, which M. de Pomponne calls flashes of rhetoric to secure

[1] M. de Vivonne was remarkably corpulent.

the good humour of the audience. There are some points in your letters I cannot reply to : we often answer ridiculously when we write from such a distance. You know how grieved we once were at the loss of some town, when they had been rejoicing for ten days at Paris because the Prince of Orange had raised the siege : but this is one of the evils of distance. Adieu, my beloved child : I embrace you very affectionately.

LETTER LXVII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, January 5, 1674.

It is a year ago this very day, since we supped with the Archbishop : at this moment perhaps you are supping with the intendant : I am afraid, my dear child, your mirth is feigned. All you say on this subject to me, and to Corbinelli, is admirable. My heart thanks you for the good opinion you have of me, in believing I hold in abhorrence all villainous proceedings. You are not deceived.

M. de Grignan tells you true ; Madame de Thianges has left off paint and covers her neck ; you would hardly know her in this disguise. She is frequently with Madame de Longueville, and is the very pink of modish devotion. But she is still good company, and has not at all the air of a recluse. I dined with her the other day ; a servant brought her a glass of liquor ; she turned to me, and said, " The fellow does not know that I am become a devotee " ; this made us all laugh. She spoke very naturally of her intentions, and of her change. She is very cautious of saying anything that may injure the reputation of her neighbour, and stops short when anything of that nature escapes her ; for my part, I think her more agreeable than ever. Wagers are laid that the Princess d'Harcourt will not turn nun these twelve months, now she is become a lady of the palace, and paints again : this rouge is the law and the prophets ; it is the great point that our new

devotion turns upon. As for the Duchess d'Aumont her taste is burying the dead.[1] They say the Duchess de Charost kills people for her, with ill-compounded medicines, and then buries them in a religious retreat. The Marchioness d'Huxelles is very good, but La Marans is more than good. Madame de Schomberg tells me very seriously that she is of the first order for seclusion and penitence, not admitting any society, and refusing even the amusements of devotion : in a word, she is a penitent in the true sense of the word, and in all the simplicity of the primitive church.

The ladies of the palace are kept in great subjection. The King has explained himself upon this subject, and will have the Queen always attended by them. Madame de Richelieu, though she does not serve any longer at table, is always present when the Queen dines, with four ladies, who wait by turns. The Countess d'Ayen[2] is the sixth : she does not like the confinement of this attendance, and of being constantly at vespers, sermons, and other religious ceremonies, but there is no perfect happiness in this world. The Marchioness de Castelnau is fair, blooming, and perfectly recovered from her grief. *L'Eclair*, they say, has only changed her apartment at Court, not very much to her satisfaction. Madame de Louvigny does not seem sufficiently delighted at her good fortune. She is thought unpardonable for not adoring her husband in the same manner as when she was first married ; this is the first time the public was ever offended at a thing of this nature. Madame de Brissac is beautiful, and follows the Princess of Conti like her shadow, La Coëtquen is still the same as ever. She has a petticoat of black velvet, embroidered with gold and silver, and a brocade cloak. This dress cost her an immense sum ; and when she thought she made the most splendid figure imaginable, every one said she was dressed like an actress ; and she has been so much rallied in consequence

[1] If we may believe Bussy, she rendered service of a different kind to the living. The Duchess of Charost was the daughter of the Superintendent Fouquet. She apparently had her recipes from her grandmother, of which we have a printed collection in two volumes, under the title of *Family Recipes by Madame Fouquet*.

[2] Marie Françoise de Bournonville, afterwards Marchioness de Noailles.

that she has thrown it aside. La Manierosa [1] is a little vexed at not being a lady of the palace. Madame de Duras, who would not accept this honour, laughs at her. La Troche is, as usual, very much interested in your affairs : but I cannot express how strongly Madame de la Fayette and M. de la Rochefoucauld have your interest at heart.

Madame de la Fayette and I went to see M. de Turenne a few days ago ; he has a slight fit of the gout. He received us with great civility, and talked much of you. The Chevalier de Grignan has given him an account of your victories ; he would have offered you his sword, if there had been any occasion for it. He intends to set out in three days. My son went yesterday very much out of humour : I was not less so, at this ill-judged and in every respect disagreeable journey.

The Dauphin saw Madame de Schomberg the other day ; they told him his grandfather had been in love with her : he asked in a whisper, " How many children has she had by him ? " They informed him of the manners [2] of that time.

The Duke de Maine [3] has been seen at Court, but he has not yet visited the Queen : he was in a coach, and saw only his father and mother.

The Chevalier de Châtillon has no longer anything to seek for ; his fortune is made. Monsieur chose rather to give him the office of Captain of his Guards, than Mademoiselle de Grancey that of the Lady of the Wardrobe. This young man therefore has the post of Vaillac, and is well provided for : they say Vaillac is to have d'Albon's and that d'Albon is discarded. I told you how our States ended, and that they repurchased the edicts at two million six hundred thousand livres, and gave the same sum as a gratuitous gift, making

[1] A feigned name.

[2] Madame de Schomberg who is here spoken of, mother of the Marshal then living, captivated Louis XIII when she was only a maid of honour, by the name of Mademoiselle d'Hautefort. The king's gallantry exacted so little, that she even tested upon the subject, and said he talked to her of nothing but dogs, horses and hunting. She was handsome and discreet. She attached herself to Queen Anne of Austria, and shared her disgrace during the life of Louis XIII. She afterwards quarrelled with her during the regency, for having spoken too freely against Cardinal Mazarin.

[3] The King's eldest son by Madame de Montespan.

together five million two hundred thousand livres ; that the air was rent with cries of " Long live the King ", that we had had bonfires, and sung *Te Deum*, because His Majesty was kind enough to accept it. Poor Sanzei is ill with measles : it is a disorder that soon passes but is alarming from its violence.

I see no reason to ask the King's pardon for the humane gentleman who was guilty of assassination : the crime is of too black a nature. The criminals who were pardoned at Rouen, were not of this stamp ; it is the only crime the King refuses to pardon. So Beuvron has mentioned it to the Abbé de Grignan.

I have heard the ladies at the Palace spoken of in a way that made me laugh. I said with Montaigne, " Let us avenge ourselves by slandering them." It is, however, true that they are under extreme subjection.

The report still prevails that the Prince sets out on Monday. The same day M. de Saint Luc is to espouse Mademoiselle de Pompadour ; about this I am quite indifferent.

Adieu, my dear ; this letter is growing too long ; I conclude it for no other reason but because everything must have an end. I embrace Grignan, and beg him to forgive me for opening Madame de Guise's letter ; I was very desirous to see her style ; my curiosity is satisfied for ever.

Guilleragues said yesterday that Pelisson abused the permission men have to be ugly.[1]

LETTER LXVIII

Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan

Paris, Monday, February 5, 1674.

It is many years ago to-day that there came into the world a creature destined to love you beyond every other thing in existence.[2] I beg you not to suffer your imagination to

[1] An expression that is become common, but which was new at that time, or it would not have been worth noticing.

[2] She refers to her birthday, 5th February, 1626.

wander either to the right hand or to the left : *Cet homme là, sire, c'étoit moi-même.*[1]

It was yesterday three years that I felt the most poignant grief of my whole life. You set out at that time for Provence, and you remain there still. My letter would be very long if I attempted to express all the sorrow I then felt, and what I have since felt, in consequence of this separation. But to leave this melancholy digression. I have received no letters from you to-day : I know not whether I am to expect any, and I fear not, as it is so late : I have, however, expected them with impatience ; I wanted to hear of your departure from Aix, and to be able to compute, with some exactness, the time of your return. Every one teases me, and I know not what to answer. I think but of you and your journey. If I receive any letters from you after this is sent away, you may make yourself perfectly easy, for I will certainly take care to do whatever you desire me.

I write to-day a little earlier than usual. M. Corbinelli and Mademoiselle de Méri are here, and have dined with me. I am going to a little opera of Molière's that is to be sung at Jellison's It is an excellent composition. The Prince, the Duke and the Duchess will be there. I shall perhaps sup at Gourville's with Madame de la Fayette, the Duke, Madame de Thianges, and M. de Vivonne, of whom we are to take our leave, as he sets out from hence to-morrow. If this party is broken up I shall perhaps go to Madame de Chaulnes, where I am earnestly invited, as well by the mistress of the house as by Cardinals de Retz and de Bouillon, who made me promise them. The first of these is very impatient to see you ; he loves you dearly.

It was apprehended that Mademoiselle de Blois had the smallpox, but it does not prove so. There is not a word said of the news from England ; this makes me conclude that there is nothing good from thence. There has been only a ball or two at Paris during the whole carnival ; there were masques at noon, but not many. It is a very dull season. The

[1] A line of Marot in an epistle to Francis I : *This man, sire, was myself.*

assemblies at St. Germain are mortifications for the King, and only show the falling off of the carnival.

Father Bourdaloüe preached a sermon on the Purification of our Lady, which transported everybody. There was such energy in his discourse as made the courtiers tremble. Never did preacher before enforce with so much authority and in so noble a manner, the great truths of the Gospel. His design was to show that every power ought to be subject to the law, from the example of our Lord, who was presented at the temple. This was insisted on with all the strength and clearness imaginable ; and certain points were urged with a force worthy of St. Paul himself.

The Archbishop of Rheims, as he returned yesterday from St. Germain, met with a curious adventure. He drove at his usual rate like a whirlwind. If he thinks himself a great man, his servants think him still greater. They passed through Nanterre, when they met a man on horseback, and in an insolent tone bid him clear the way. The poor man used his utmost endeavours to avoid the danger that threatened him, but his horse proved unmanageable. To make a long story short, the coach and six turned them both topsy-turvy ; but at the same time the coach too was completely overturned. In an instant the horse and the man, instead of amusing themselves with having their limbs broken, rose almost miraculously, the man remounted and galloped away, and is galloping still for ought I know ; while the servants, the Archbishop's coachman, and the Archbishop himself at the head of them cried out " Stop that villain, stop him, thrash him soundly ". The rage of the Archbishop was so great that afterwards, in relating the adventure, he said " if he could have caught the rascal he would have broke all his bones, and cut off both his ears ".

Adieu, my dear, delightful child, I cannot express my eagerness to see you. I shall direct this letter to Lyons ; it is the third ; the two first were to be left with the *chamarier*. You must be got hither by this time or never.

[Madame de Grignan arrived at Paris a few days after the date of this letter, where she remained till the end of May, 1675.]

LETTER *LXIX

Madame de Sévigné to Count de Bussy

Paris, October 15, 1674.

It seems to me that I do not write well; and if it were necessary for me to have a good opinion of my own letters, I should desire you to give me confidence by your approbation.

Your son, and the little Canoness de Rabutin, his sister, whom I very much love, have dined with me. Their name excites an interest in my heart, and their youthful merit delights me. I could wish the dear boy to have a good education: it is presuming too much to leave everything to a good natural understanding. There were two Rabutins in the regiment of Anjou, commanded by Saint Géran; he has mentioned them to me in very strong terms of praise: one of them was killed in the last battle M. de Turenne gained near Strasbourg; the other was wounded. These brothers were distinguished by their valour. I think it odd that this virtue should be inherited only by the males of our family, and that the females should have taken all the timidity. Never was anything better divided, nor more distinctly separated; for you have not left us a particle of boldness. In some families the virtues and the vices are a little blended. But let us return to the battle.

M. de Turenne has again beaten the enemy, taken eight pieces of cannon, a great quantity of arms and baggage, and remained master of the field. These continual victories give great pleasure to the King. I thought your letter to him a very good one, and wished its effect might be equally so. Fortune has never displeased me so highly as in abandoning you. She has been guilty of still greater injustice to M. de Rohan.[1] His affair goes on badly. It is by witnessing greater misfortunes that we learn to bear our own with patience.

[1] The Chevalier de Rohan had entered into a conspiracy to deliver Quillebœuf to the enemy. He was beheaded in the following month.

Send me word how you proceed with the history of our Rabutins. Cardinal de Retz is here. His head is full of genealogies. I should be delighted with his being acquainted with ours, with the charms you have given it. It would have been a great amusement to him at Commerci, but he does not now talk of going there. I rather think you will find him here ; it is to our interest that he should pass the winter with us, his society being more desirable than that of almost any other person.

My daughter is very much pleased with what you have written to her ; nothing can be more gallant. She promises to write to you by the first opportunity, with good ink.[1] My son sends you a thousand thanks for your remembrance. It is true that to be in the situation in which the gendarmes were placed at the battle of Senef was inevitably to be shot. What a happiness that he is safe ! Adieu, my dear cousin.

LETTER LXX

To Madame de Grignan

Livri, Monday, May 27, 1675.

How dreadful is the day, my child, that ushers in absence ! How did you bear it ? For my part, I felt all the bitterness and grief I imagined I should, and had so long dreaded. What a moment was that of our separation ! How bitter the farewell, how melancholy the parting between two persons who are so devoted to each other ! But I will not continue the subject, nor *celebrate*, as you used to say, all the thoughts that oppress my heart. I am sure you were affected at embracing me for the last time.[2] I returned to Paris in a condition that you may easily imagine : Madame de Coulanges gave way to me in everything. I stopped first at Cardinal de Retz's, where my

[1] M. de Bussy had complained that he had not been able to read Madame de Grignan's postscript, because it was written with such pale ink. " It is only fit," said he, " to write promises that are not intended to be kept."

[2] The mother and daughter took their leave of each other at Fontainebleau, whither Madame de Coulanges and Madame de Sévigné conducted Madame de Grignan on her way.

grief so much increased that I sent to request M. de la Rochefoucauld, Madame de la Fayette, and Madame de Coulanges, who were all come to see me, to excuse my receiving them : we should conceal our weakness before the strong. The good Cardinal entered into all my distress ; indeed the great friendship and esteem he has for you make him sympathize with me in my loss. His picture is being painted by a monk of St. Victor ; and I believe, notwithstanding Caumartin, he will give it to you. He sets off in a few days ; his secret[1] has got wind, and his domestics are bathed in tears.

Do not condemn me, my dear child, for what I felt when I got home. How different did everything appear ! What solitude ! What gloom ! There were your room, your closet, and your picture—but ah ! the dear original was gone ! M. de Grignan will perfectly understand my meaning, and enter into all my feelings on the occasion. The next morning, which was yesterday, I awoke at five o'clock, so I got up and called upon Corbinelli and the Abbé, and brought them hither with me. We have had incessant rains, and I very much fear lest the roads in Burgundy should be spoiled. We amuse ourselves here with reading the *Maxims*, and Corbinelli explains them to me. He uses all his endeavours to teach me the proper government of my heart. I shall be a considerable gainer by this excursion, if I am happy enough to retain his lessons. I intend returning to-morrow ; I stood in need of this short repose, to recover my senses a little, and make my face fit to be seen.

LETTER LXXI

To the Same

Paris, Friday, June 7, 1675.

At length, my dear, I am reduced to the solitary comfort of receiving your letters ; it is true that these are very dear

[1] The Cardinal de Retz had taken the resolution to retire to Commerci, with a design to retrench his expenses, in order to pay off his debts before he died, in which he was happy enough to succeed.

to me, but I cannot reflect that I have had you for fifteen months together, without feeling the most lively emotions of tenderness and grief. There are some people in the world who would persuade me that my excess of fondness was troublesome to you, and that my constant anticipation of your wants and inclinations, which in consequence became my own, must have been insipid and repugnant to you. I know not, my dear child, how true this may be; but I can safely say that it never was my intention to make you uncomfortable. I must confess that I have perhaps a little too much indulged my own inclination, and suffered you as seldom out of my sight as possible; and this proceeded from my being unable to deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing you; but I had never any reason to think this behaviour was irksome to you. After all, my dear girl, let me beg you to think well of the great confidence I have in you, and to believe that it is impossible for anyone to be more perfectly forlorn and wretched than I am in your absence; you give me excellent advice as to my self-government on these occasions; I attend to your lessons, and endeavour to put them into practice. I do as other people do, I go out and I come in; but when I can talk of you and am happy, a few tears relieve me inexpressibly. I know where I can indulge myself in this liberty; you judge rightly that having seen you everywhere, it is difficult to me, in the beginning, not to be sensible to a thousand things I meet with in my way.

Yesterday I saw La Villars, who has a most sincere regard for you; we were alone, indulging ourselves in solitude at the Tuileries. I dined in the forenoon with the Cardinal, and could not help being afflicted at my not seeing you there. I had a good deal of conversation with the Abbé du Michel, to whom we give in trust, as it were, the person of his eminence. The Abbé seems to me a very good sort of man; he appears to have a sound judgment and clear reason, and expresses the greatest regard for our friend; so that we hope he will be of service to him in taking care of his health, and preventing him from injuring it by too strict an attention to the duties of his retirement. They are to set out on Tuesday; this will be another day of grief for me, though not to be compared

to that of Fontainebleau. Think, my child, that a fortnight has already passed, and that the days slide away in whatever way they are spent. Everyone you have mentioned is delighted with your remembrance, and receive me better in consequence. I shall see our Cardinal this evening : he will have me stay an hour or two every evening with him before his bed-time, that I may take advantage of the little time that remains.

Corbinelli was with me when I received your letter, and shared in your pleasure in confounding the Jesuit ; he wished heartily he had been a witness of your victory. Madame de le Troche was charmed with what you say of her. Be perfectly easy, my dear child, with respect to my health. I know you will hear no jesting upon that subject. The Chevalier de Grignan is quite well. I am going to send your letter to M. de Turenne. Our brethren are at St. Germain. I have a great mind to send you La Garde's letter, which would give you a general view of the life that is led at Court. The King went to confession, and received the Sacrament, on Whit Sunday ; so did Madame de Montespan [1] ; her life is exemplary ; she is wholly occupied with her workmen, and goes to Saint Cloud, where she plays at hoca.

Apropos, my hair stood on end the other day, when the coadjutor told me that when he went to Aix he found M. de Grignan there playing at hoca ! What madness ! In the name of God do not permit this ; it is a point you ought to gain, if he has any love for you. I hope Paulina is well, since you do not mention her to me ; I desire you will love her for the sake of her godfather, M. de la Garde. Madame de Coulanges has so well managed the Princess d'Harcourt that she herself begs your pardon a thousand times for not being at home when you called to take leave of her. I would not have you trifle with her on this occasion. What you say about trees

[1] A momentary separation took place between the King and Madame de Montespan. But Bossuet, by whose exhortations this was effected, did not long enjoy his success. The lovers had no sooner met, and conversed again for a quarter of an hour, than they dismissed their scruples, and the birth of the Duchess of Orleans and the Count de Toulouse was, according to Madame de Caylus, the consequence.

which shed their leaves is admirable ; the unchangeableness of those in Provence [1] is absolutely tiresome. It is much better to grow green again than to be always green. Corbinelli says that it is the property of God alone to be immutable, and that immutability in anything else is an imperfection : he was in a fine humour for philosophizing to-day. Madame de la Troche and the Prior of Livri were here, and he amused himself in proving to them the attributes of the Deity. Adieu, my dearest child ; I embrace you : but, alas ! when shall I embrace you more closely ? Life is so short ! But I must pass over that thought. Your letters are at present the only objects of my impatience.

LETTER LXXII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, June 28, 1675.

Madame de Vins expressed herself very affectionately about you yesterday, my dear ; that is, in her way, but it is not a bad one : there seemed no *interlineations* in what she said.

We have no news. The King's good star has brought the Duke of Lorraine and the Prince of Orange across the Meuse again. M. de Turenne has now elbow-room, so that we are no longer confined in any part. I am rejoiced that my letters are so pleasing to you : I can hardly think they are so agreeable as you say they are. I know they have no stiffness in them. Our good Cardinal is gone to solitude ; his departure gave me sorrow, and reminded me of yours. I have long remarked our cruel separations to the four corners of the world. It is very cold : we are obliged to have a fire, and so are you, which is more astonishing still. You judge well respecting *Quantova* : if she cannot return to her old ways she will push her authority and grandeur beyond the clouds ; but she must

[1] In Provence there are several kinds of trees that never lose their leaves, but remain green throughout the year ; as the olive, the orange tree, the evergreen oak, the laurel, etc.

prepare to be loved the whole year without scruple : in the meantime her house is crowded by the whole Court, visits are paid alternately, and her consequence is unbounded. Be not uneasy respecting my journey to Brittany : you are too good and too attentive to my health. I will have nothing to do with La Mousse : the dullness of others weighs me down more than my own. I have no time to go to Livri : I have made a vow to expedite your affairs. I shall give your compliments to Madame de Villars and Madame de la Fayette. The latter has still a little fever upon her. Adieu, my dearest child, believe me to be most sincerely yours.

LETTER LXXIII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, July 19, 1675.

Guess from whence I write to you, my dear : from M. de Pomponne's, as you will perceive by the few lines which Madame de Vins sends you with this. I have been with her, the Abbé Arnauld, and d'Hacqueville, to see the procession of St. Genevieve pass ; we returned in very good time ; we were back by two o'clock ; there are many that will not return till night. Do you know, that this procession is considered a very fine sight ? It is attended by all the religious orders, in their respective habits, the curates of the several parishes, and all the Canons of Notre-Dame, preceded by the Archbishop of Paris in his pontificals, and on foot, giving his benediction to the right and left as he goes, till he comes to the Cathedral ; I should have said to the left only, for the Abbé de St. Genevieve marches on the right, barefoot, and preceded by a hundred and fifty monks, barefoot also ; the cross and mitre are borne before him, like the Archbishop, and he gives his benedictions in the same manner, but with great apparent devotion, humility, and fasting, and an air of penitence, which show that he is to

say mass at Notre-Dame. The Parliament, in their red robes, and the principal companies, follow the shrine of the Saint, which glitters with precious stones, and is carried by twenty men clad in white, and barefoot. The provost of the merchants, and four counsellors, are left as hostages at the church of St. Genevieve, for the return of this precious treasure. You will ask me, perhaps, why the shrine was exposed. It was to put a stop to the continual rains we have had, and to obtain warm and dry weather, which happened at the very time they were making preparations for the procession, to which, as it was intended to obtain for us all kinds of blessings, I presume we owe His Majesty's return, who is expected here on Sunday next. In my letter of Wednesday I will write you all that is worth writing.

M. de la Trousse is conducting a detachment of six thousand men to Marshal de Créqui, who is to join M. de Turenne. La Fare and the others remain with the Dauphin's gens-d'armes, in the army commanded by the Prince. The other day Madame, and Madame de Monaco, took d'Hacqueville at the Hôtel de Grammont to walk about the streets and the Tuileries incog. ; as Her Highness is not much given to a disposition for gallantry, her dignity sits very easy on her. The Tuscan Princess is expected every hour. This is another of the blessings obtained by the shrine of St. Genevieve. I saw one of your letters yesterday to the Abbé de Pontcarré ; it is the best letter that ever was written : there is no part of it which has not some point and wit ; he has sent a copy of it to His Eminence, for the original is kept as sacred as the shrine.

Adieu, my dearest and best-beloved : you are so remarkable for your inviolable love of truth that I do not abate myself a single expression of your kindness towards me ; and you may judge then how happy it makes me.

LETTER *LXXIV

From Madame de Sévigné to Madame de la Fayette

Paris, Thursday, ——[1]

You know, my dear, that we do not bathe every day; and during the three days that I did not throw myself into the water I went to Livri, from whence I returned yesterday intending to go back again when I shall have finished my dippings, and our Abbé settled some little affairs which still detain him here. On the eve of my departure for Livri, I went to see Mademoiselle, who caressed me exceedingly; I presented your compliments to her, and she received them very graciously, at least she did not appear to have anything upon her mind: I went with Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, M. de Valençai, and Madame de Lavardin: she is now going to Court, and she is so pleased that she will be in good humour with every one the whole winter. I have no news to send you, for I have not seen the *gazette*[2] these three days. You must have heard, however, that Madame de N. is dead, and that her lover, Trevigné, has been almost dead also with grief; for my part, I wish he had died, for the honour of the ladies. I have still eruptions on my face, my poor little dear, for which I am constantly using some remedy. I am in the hands of Bourdelot, who physics me with melons and ice, which everybody says will kill me. This idea renders me so irresolute that though I find myself better for what he orders me, I take it with trembling. Adieu, my dearest; you well know that it is impossible to love you more tenderly than I do.

[1] This letter is without date, but a little attention shows that it could not have been written later than the summer of 1675, when Madame de Sévigné was in her forty-ninth year.

[2] Madame de Lavardin, who was very fond of news, and went everywhere in quest of it.

LETTER LXXV

Madame de Sévigné to Monsieur de Grignan

Paris, July 31, 1675.

To you, my dear Count, I now address myself, to acquaint you with one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to France ; it is the death of M. de Turenne, which I am persuaded will give you as much concern as it has given us. The news reached Versailles on Monday, and the King felt his loss as that of the greatest general, and the best man in the world. The whole Court was in tears at the intelligence, and M. de Condom was near fainting. Everything was ready for setting out on a party of pleasure to Fontainebleau, but this immediately broke it off : never was there a man more sincerely, or more universally, regretted. All ranks and degrees were in the greatest consternation, and the streets were filled with people who gathered in crowds to lament the loss of their hero. I send you a faithful account of what passed a few days before his death : to a conduct, for the space of three months, which may be deemed almost miraculous, you have only to add the fatal day which at once terminated his glory and his life. He had the pleasure to see the enemy's army decamp and fly before him, and the 27th, which was Saturday, he ascended a little eminence the better to observe their march ; his intention was to attack their rear, and about noon he wrote a letter to the King informing him of his design, and that he had sent orders to Brissac to have the prayers of forty hours [1] said in the camp. He mentioned in his dispatch the death of young d'Hocquincourt, and added that he would send a courier to acquaint His Majesty with the issue of his undertaking. He sealed his letter and sent it away at two o'clock. He then went to the top of the hill, attended by eight or ten of the officers, when a ball fired at random by the enemy at a distance unfortunately entered his body. I leave you to judge what were the

[1] A form of prayer in the Roman liturgy.

cries and lamentations of his army. A courier was instantly dispatched hither, who arrived on Monday, as I told you, so that the King received M. de Turenne's letter, and that containing the news of his death, within an hour of each other. Some time after, one of M. de Turenne's gentlemen arrived with the news that the armies were very near each other ; that M. de Lorges commanded in his uncle's place, and that nothing could exceed the affliction of the army. The King immediately ordered the Duke to repair thither post, till the Prince could follow in person, whose ill-health and the fatiguing length of the journey make it probable that bad consequences may happen before he can arrive. God grant he may return in safety. M. de Luxembourg remains in Flanders as Commander-in-Chief. The lieutenants-general of the Prince are Messieurs de Duras and de la Feuillade.

Marshal de Créqui remains where he was.

The morning after this melancholy news, M. de Louvois proposed to His Majesty to repair the loss he had sustained in this gallant leader by creating eight Generals in the place of one : this was certainly the way to lose nothing. At the same time he made eight new Marshals of France, to wit M. de Rochefort,[1] to whom the others are indebted for their promotions, Messieurs de Luxembourg, Duras, la Feuillade, d'Estrades, Navailles, Schomberg, and Vivonne ; eight in all. I leave you to make your own reflections on this part of my narrative. The grand master [2] was in despair at being omitted, but they have made him a Duke. Of what service, however, is that dignity to him ? He has the honours of the Louvre already, in virtue of his place : he will not be admitted to the Parliament, on account of consequences, and his wife will accept of a tabouret nowhere but at Bouillé [3] ; however, it is a favour, and if he were a widower he might perhaps

[1] M. de Louvois, being desirous to make M. de Rochefort a Marshal of France, could not compass it without proposing the other seven, who were older Lieutenants-General than M. de Rochefort.

[2] The Count de Lude, Grand Master of the Ordnance.

[3] The Countess de Lude was remarkable for passing all her time in the country, through her extravagant fondness for the diversion of hunting.

marry some rich young widow. You know the Count de Grammont hates Rochefort. I saw him yesterday ; he was ready to burst with rage : he has written him a letter and acquainted the King with it. The letter is as follows :—

Monseigner,—Favour can obtain as much as merit [1] ; I shall therefore say no more.

Adieu, Rochefort,

The Count de Grammont.

I fancy you will see this compliment in the same light as we do.

I have seen an almanac, of Milan, I think, where in the month of July you read, " The sudden death of a great man " ; and in the month of August, " Ah ! what do I see ? " We live in continual alarm here ; but, however, the six thousand men are gone to ruin Brittany : two Provençals are charged with the commission ; the Bailli de Forbin and the Marquis de Vins. M. de Pomponne has recommended our poor lands to them. M. de Chaulnes and M. de Lavardin are in perfect despair : these are in the list of disagreeables. If ever you play the fool in your province, I should never wish them to send Bretons to correct you. See how far my heart is from harbouring revenge.

This, my dear Count, is all the news that is stirring : and in return for a delightful letter, I send you one which cannot fail of giving you the greatest sorrow. Believe me, I am as much concerned as you can possibly be. We have passed a whole winter in hearing of the divine qualities of this hero ! Never did man approach so near perfection. The more he was known the more he was esteemed, and the more he will be regretted.

My dear children, I embrace you both cordially : I pity you, that you have nobody with whom you can talk of this great event. It is natural to be fond of communicating one's thoughts on such an occasion. If you are grieved, it is no more than we all are here.

[1] A verse in the *Cid*.

LETTER LXXVI

To Madame de Grignan

Paris, Friday, August 2, 1675.

I cannot help thinking, my dear, of the astonishment and grief you have felt at the death of M. de Turenne. Cardinal de Bouillon is inconsolable : he heard it from a gentleman of Louvigny's, who, willing to be the first to make his compliments of condolence on the occasion, stopped his coach as he was coming from Pontoise to Versailles. The Cardinal did not know what to make of his discourse ; and the gentleman, on his part, finding he knew nothing of the matter, made off as fast as he could. The Cardinal immediately dispatched one of his people after him and soon learned the fatal news, at which he fainted ; he was carried back to Pontoise, where he has been two days without eating a morsel, passing his whole time in tears and lamentations. Madame de Guénégaud and Cavoye have been to see him, who are no less afflicted than himself. I have just written him a note, which I think pretty good. I informed him of your grief upon the occasion, both from the interest you take in all that concerns him, and from your esteem and admiration for the deceased hero. Pray do not forget to write to him yourself, for I think you write particularly well on such subjects. In this case, indeed, you have nothing to do but give a loose to your pen. Paris is in a general consternation of grief at this great loss. We wait in great anxiety for another courier from Germany. Montecuculi, who was retreating, is returned back ; and doubtless hopes to profit not a little by an event so favourable for him. It is said the troops uttered cries of grief that might have been heard at the distance of two leagues when news was brought them of their General's death. No consideration could stop them : they insisted upon being led immediately to the fight ; they were resolved to avenge the death of their father, their leader, their protector, and defender ; while he was with them,

they said, they feared no danger, and were determined to avenge his death : "So lead us on," they cried, "think not to ſtop us ; we are bent for the fight." This I had from a gentleman who belonged to M. de Turenne, and was ſent from the camp to His Majeſty. He was bathed in tears while he related this, and all the time that he ſpoke of the circumſtances of his maſter's death. The ball ſtruck M. de Turenne directly across the body. You may easily imagine he fell from his horſe, and expired ; but he had juſt life enough left to crawl a ſtep or two forwards, and clench his hands in the agonies of death ; and then a cloak was thrown over the body. Boisguyot, which is the name of the perſon who gave us this account, never quitted him till he was carried, with as little noiſe as poſſible, to the neareſt houſe. M. de Lorges was about a league diſtant from the place where the accident happened ; judge what muſt have been his feelings when he heard of it. His is the chief loſs, who muſt take charge of this army and be anſwerable for all events till the arrival of the Prince, who cannot join him in leſs than three weeks. I think twenty times a day of the poor Chevalier de Grignan : he certainly will never be able to ſupport this loſs without loſing his reaſon. Indeed, everyone who knew and loved M. de Turenne is greatly to be pitied.

The King ſaid yeſterday, in ſpeaking of the eight new marſhals that have been made, that if Gadagne had had a little patience he ſhould have been of the number ; but as he thought fit to be out of patience and retire, it was very well as it was. They ſay the Count d'Eſtrées is endeavouring to diſpoſe of his place, being one of thoſe who are diſappointed at not having had a ſtaff. Guess what de Coulanges is doing : he is copying word for word, and without being the leaſt tired, all the news I have written you. I told you the Grand Maſter was made a Duke : he dare not complain ; he is to be a Marſhal of France the firſt opportunity ; and the manner in which the King ſpoke to him has done him infinitely more honour than the dignity he has conferred on him. His Majeſty ordered him to give de Pomponne his name and qualifications. "Sire," replied he, "I will give him the patent conferred on my grand-

father, and he will have nothing more to do than to have that copied." We must congratulate him. M. de Grignan will have a great deal to do upon all these promotions ; and it is not unlikely he may make himself some enemies : for our new dignitaries aspire to the title of Monseigneur, and will not be convinced of the injustice of their claim.

But to return to M. de Turenne. When he took leave of Cardinal de Retz, he spoke to him thus : "Sir, I make no professions : it is not my way ; but let me beg you seriously to believe me when I tell you that were it not for the present state of affairs, in which I may perhaps be wanted, I would follow your example : and I give you my word that, if I live to return, I will think of my salvation in time, and as you have done, set apart some few moments between life and death." I had this from d'Hacqueville not two days ago. The Cardinal will be very much affected at his death. It seems to me, my child, as if I could not tire you by talking of him : we agree that there are some things of which we cannot know too much. I embrace M. de Grignan. I wish you had someone with you to whom you could talk of M. de Turenne. The de Villars adore you ; de Villars is returned, but St. Géran and his head remain behind. His wife was in hopes that they would have had some pity on him and brought him back with the rest. I suppose La Garde has acquainted you with his design of paying you a visit. I long to take my leave of him for that journey. Mine, as you know, is put off for some time. We must wait to see what effect the march of six thousand men, commanded by two Provençals, will produce in our country. It is very hard for M. de Lavardin to have given 400,000 francs for his place, and to be obliged to command under M. de Forbin ; for M. de Chaulnes still retains the shadow of first commander. Madame de Lavardin and M. d'Harrouïs are the compasses by which I steer my course. Be under no concern about me, my dear, nor my health : I shall take medicine after the full moon, and when I have had news from Germany. Adieu ! my dearest child. I love you so passionately that if anyone was desirous of obtaining my affection he might think himself well off if I loved him only as much as I do your picture.

LETTER LXXVII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, August 9, 1675.

As my note of Wednesday was so very short, I forgot many things I had to say to you. M. Boucherat writes me word that the coadjutor did wonders at a conference held at St. Germain on Monday night, upon the affair of the clergy in his diocese. The Bishops of Condom and of Agen told me the same, when I was at Versailles. I am persuaded he will acquit himself as well in his speech to the King ; so that he will always merit our praise.

Our poor friends have repassed the Rhine very happily, after having beaten the enemy. This is very much to the honour of M. de Lorges. We all wish the King may send him a marshal's staff, after an action so noble, so useful, and of which he alone has the merit. His horse was killed under him by a ball, which passed between his legs ; so that it may be said that he was mounted on a cannon-ball. Providence, however, directed it, and many others. We lost in this action the Marquis de Montbrun, and perhaps M. de Monlort, brother to the Prince d'Harcourt, your cousin-german. The loss of the enemy was very great by their own confession : they had four thousand men killed. We lost but seven or eight hundred. The Duke de Sault, the Chevalier de Grignan, and the cavalry under their command distinguished themselves. The English performed things almost incredible. In a word, we have been very fortunate. It is said that M. de Montecuculi, after having sent his compliments to M. de Lorges, and expressed his grief for the loss of so great a General, informed him that he might repass the Rhine without molestation ; that he would not expose his reputation to the rage of an army inflamed with grief for the loss of their beloved General, and to the valour of young Frenchmen, which nothing could resist in their first impetuosity. In reality, the engagement was not general ; and only the troops which attacked us were

defeated. Many courtiers, whom I dare not in prudence name, have signalized themselves in mentioning M. de Lorges to the King, and in ſtating the reaſons which ought to make him immediately a Marſhal of France, but without effect. He has only the government of Alsace, and a penſion of twenty thouſand livres, which Vaubrun had. Ah ! this is not what he wanted. The Count d'Auvergne has the ſituation of Colonel-General of the cavalry, and the government of Limouſin. Cardinal de Bouillon is very much grieved.

Our good Cardinal has written again to the Pope, telling him that he cannot but hope that when His Holiness had ſeen the reaſons that influence him, he would yield to his moſt humble prayers to receive his reſignation : but we believe that the Pope, who is infallible, and who does nothing in vain, will not ſo much as read his letter, having written his anſwer beforehand, like our little friend whom you know.

Let us talk of M. de Turenne ; it is long ſince we mentioned him. Do you not wonder that we think ourſelves happy in having repaſſed the Rhine, and that what we ſhould have been grieved at if he had been living ſeems a happineſs now he is no more ? See what the loſs of one man will effect.

Let me call your attention to ſomething that appears to me extremely noble : I can fancy myſelf to be reading the Roman Hiſtory. St. Hilaire, Lieutenant-General of the Artillery, ſtopped M. de Turenne, who was going another way, to ſhow him a battery : it was juſt as if he had ſaid, " Pray, ſir, ſtop a little, it is here you are to be killed." A ball took off the arm of St. Hilaire, who was pointing to the battery, and killed M. de Turenne. The ſon of St. Hilaire [1] threw himſelf upon his father, weeping and lamenting. " Hold your peace, my ſon," ſaid he : " ſee," pointing to M. de Turenne who lay dead, " ſee here a loſs that muſt be wept eternally ; a loſs that is irreparable." Without paying the leaſt attention to himſelf, he was wholly taken up in lamenting this great man. The nobleneſs of the ſentiment drew tears of admiration from M. de la Rochefoucauld.

[1] Afterwards Lieutenant-General of the Artillery, and of the King's army, in the room of his father.

M. de Turenne's gentleman, who is returned again from the army, says that the Chevalier de Grignan has performed the most heroic actions ; that he returned five times to the charge ; that his cavalry forced the enemy to retreat, and that his uncommon vigour decided the fate of the battle. M. de Boufflers also acted nobly, as did the Duke de Sault, and particularly M. de Lorges, who proved himself the nephew of a hero. I return to the Chevalier de Grignan, and cannot help wondering that he has not been wounded in pushing forward so much as he has done into the very heart of the enemy. M. de Turenne had clothed at his own expense an English regiment, and there were only nine hundred francs found in his coffer. His body is carried to Turenne : many of his people, and even of his friends, have followed it. The Duke de Bouillon is returned, the Chevalier de Coislin because he is ill ; but the Chevalier de Vendôme, on the very eve of the battle : everyone exclaims at this, and even the beauty of Madame de Ludre [1] does not excuse him. The Duke de Villeroi is inconsolable at the death of M. de Turenne. He writes that it is not in the power of fortune to do him any farther harm, after having deprived him of the pleasure of being loved and esteemed by such a man.

LETTER LXXVIII

To the Same

Paris, Monday, August 12, 1675.

I send you one of the most charming accounts we have yet had of the death of M. de Turenne : it is from the young Marquis de Feuquières to Madame de Vins, and was written for M. de Pomponne. This Minister tells me it is a better account than the King received ; it is true that this little

[1] Canoness of Poussai. It appears that this lady was afterwards beloved by the King.

Feuquières [1] has a spice of Arnauld in his head, which makes him write better than any of our courtiers.

I am just returned from a visit to Cardinal de Bouillon. He is so altered, you would hardly know him: he asked much after you, and does not in the least doubt your feeling upon the occasion. He told me several affecting anecdotes of M. de Turenne. This great man was certainly very fit to die: for his life had been a continued scene of innocence and integrity. He asked the Cardinal at Whitsuntide whether he might not communicate without previous confession. His nephew answered him in the negative, because he could not be assured that he had committed no offence against God since Easter. M. de Turenne then informed him of his situation: he was a thousand leagues distant from the commission of any mortal sin. However, he went to confession, in compliance with custom. "But," says he, "must I confess to Recolet, as to M. de St. Gervais? Is it the same thing?" In truth, his was a soul worthy of heaven: it was too nearly allied to God, and had preserved itself too incorruptly not to return to him immediately. He was extremely fond of M. d'Elbeuf's son,[2] who is a little miracle of valour, at fourteen years of age. He sent him last year to pay his respects to M. de Lorraine, who said to him, "My little cousin, you are too happy in being able to see and hear M. de Turenne every day: you have no father, no friend, no relation, but this great man: kiss his footsteps as he passes, and think it a happiness to die at his feet." The poor child is almost dead with grief; but grief of reason more than of childishness, which it is feared may prove fatal to him. The Count d'Auvergne has taken him with him, for he has nothing to expect from his father. Cavoye is afflicted in form. The Duke de Villeroi has written home letters in the excess of his grief, expressed in such strong terms as make it necessary to conceal them. He acknowledges no fortune, no favour, superior to that of

[1] Anthony de Pas, Marquis de Feuquières, author of the *Memoires sur la Guerre*. He was the grandson of Anne Arnauld, the aunt of M. Arnauld d'Andilly.

[2] Henri de Lorraine, Duke d'Elbeuf, son of Charles of Lorraine and Elizabeth de la Tour de Bouillon, M. de Turenne's niece.

having been beloved by this hero, and declares that he now holds in contempt the esteem and favour of every human being, let what will come of it. M. de Marsillac has signalized himself with respect to M. de Lorges by declaring that he merited a much greater reward than the spoils of M. de Vaubrun. Certainly nothing could have been more edifying, nothing more encouraging as an example than to have sent him a marshal's staff in return for such great success.

Madame de Coulanges sends me word how easily you will be comforted if she spends the winter at Lyons, and how glad she is that you are at your seat. I inform her in general of the commissions you send me, which proceed from the same kind intention ; sometimes to prevent the one from receiving consolation, and sometimes that the other may be marked with the smallpox and be ill ; in short, I tell her what pains I take to execute your commissions. She writes us admirable letters, and often speaks of the delightful *hatred* that subsists between you.

The Chevalier de Lorraine is retired to an Abbey he has in Picardy : Madame de Monaco met him at Chilli, but could not dissuade him from going. He is thought to be a little out in his politics : and it is imagined that he will find himself caught. It is somewhat extraordinary to desire a principal officer to be dismissed, whose conduct has given satisfaction [1] ; and yet he sets his return at no less a price. He might perhaps have been indulged some years ago ; but the times are altered : we are not fickle for having changed once. It is not true that the Marquises d'Effiat and Volonne have resigned, but as they accompanied the Chevalier to Chilli, it is probable they will feel disgust while this disgrace lasts. La Garde will have told you what M. de Louvois said to Madame Langlée, and how well pleased His Majesty is with the conduct of the Chevalier de Grignan. If there is any happiness for a man in this life, he must certainly enjoy it in the glory he has acquired on this occasion ; not a relation, nor even an indifferent person, mentions him but in terms of the highest encomium. Had it

[1] By this officer is meant Monsieur, whom the Chevalier de Lorraine governed as a master, or rather as a mistress.

not been for his breast-plate he had been a dead man. He received a number of blows upon that blessed cuirass : he never wore one before. Providence ! Providence !

When the news came of the death of M. de Turenne, a servant of the Archbishop of Rheims awoke him, at five o'clock in the morning, to acquaint him with it. He asked if the army was defeated ; he told him, no : upon which he reproved his valet-de-chambre for waking him, called him *rascal*, drew his curtains again, and resumed his nap.[1] Farewell ! child. What can I say after this ?

I send you this account at five o'clock in the evening ; I make up my packet alone. M. de Coulanges has been here, and would copy it. I hate that beyond measure. I have remembered you to M. de Pomponne and Madame de Vins, who are pleased that you think of them. I told the former how delighted you were that you had nothing to do with the foolish quarrels of Provence ; he laughed, and I mentioned the reasons of your wisdom : he wished the Bretons would amuse themselves in quarrelling instead of revolting. I saw Madame de Rouillé at her own house ; I always thought her agreeable ; I thought I was at Aix. I should like her daughter [2] extremely, but she has higher views. Madame de Verneuil and Madame La Maréchale de Castelnau have just been admiring your picture ; they like it extremely, but it is not so handsome as you.

LETTER LXXIX

To the Same

Paris, Monday, August 19, 1675.

I begin this letter, but shall not finish it till I have told you a great many things. I am thinking which I shall choose first.

[1] This indifference in the brother of M. de Louvois cannot be considered as at all wonderful.

[2] No doubt, for M. de Sévigné.

I must relate some excellent things that have been said by the King, and which it will gratify you to hear. He was sensible of the loss he has sustained in M. de Turenne : he was for some time thoughtful, and could not but attribute our last misfortune to the being deprived of that experienced general. One of the courtiers, wishing to make him believe that our loss had been trifling, he replied that he hated such dissimulation, for the defeat was the completest imaginable. He told those who seemed inclined to excuse Marshal de Créqui that he acknowledged him to be a brave man ; " but what vexes me," added the King, " is that my troops have been so shamefully beaten by persons who know nothing beyond how to play at basset : certainly the Duke of Zell is but a young player ; this, however, is a tolerable specimen of his skill." Another courtier asking what business the Marshal had to begin the attack, the King replied by repeating a story which he remembered of the Duke of Weimar,[1] and which was extremely applicable to the occasion. This Duke of Weimar happening to be in France, an old man of the name of Parabere, and one of the knights of the cordon-bleu, said to him, speaking of an engagement that had terminated in a similar manner, " But why, sir, did you give battle ? "—" Because, sir," said the Duke, " I thought to have gained a victory " : and then turning upon his heel he asked the standers-by " Who is that blue-ribbon fool ? " The application of this story must have been highly amusing. M. de Lorraine was very unwilling to obey the young Duke of Zell, who is brother to the Duke of Hanover ; but the Duke of Zell, who had all his troops there, wished to command them himself : and everything succeeded to his wish. Nothing has been heard of Marshal de Créqui since he was seen in the little boat ; for my part, I believe him dead. The Chevalier de Lorraine is no longer thought of : he is at his abbey ; this is no time for trifling news. I have sent all your letters. I shall speak to M. de Pomponne about the *monseigneur*. In the meantime, I fancy M. de Vivonne had his passport without any farther consequences ; and as it is certain that you ought not on any account to disoblige him, I would, in your place,

[1] One of the greatest generals of the seventeenth century.

write him a note, and slip in a *monseigneur* in honour of his family ; as to the others, we will dispute it with them a little, such as Beuvron and Lavardin, who make their wives, aunts, and mothers write to them in that style. I know this to be a fact, and that they are for delaying the decision.[1] It is imagined that d'Ambres will be worsted in his dispute with Marshal d'Albert, and that the rule will be made general. The King, however, is to decide the business in a few days.

Monday night.

I have had an hour's conversation with M. de Pomponne and Madame de Vins : and after having gone over several subjects, amongst which Provence had its share, I mentioned the *monseigneur*. " Ah, for God's sake, Madame," said M. de Pomponne to me, " let M. de Grignan keep clear of Monsieur or he will make his court badly. The King has explained himself in the affair of the Marquis d'Ambres, who must knuckle down. Marshal de Grammont says, in his way, that the Count de Guiche was not a mean fellow, without birth or dignity, and that he never boggled at giving the title of *monseigneur* to any Marshal of France ; therefore, I beg that M. de Grignan will follow my advice in this matter." These were his very words ; I write them as they come from his lips ; so I would not have you hesitate with M. de Vivonne : you may avoid writing to the others ; but if you do write to them, as Marshal de Grammont says, you must not *boggle*. It is now four days since the King explained himself upon the subject, and the partisans of Marshal de Grammont support it with all their might. Madame de Vins desired me give you the fullest assurance of her esteem, and to tell you it is not every one on whom she bestows it. Mesdames de Villars and de St. Géran came in a little while after we had done talking : the latter has spoken to the King, and requested that the government, which was the late Vaubrun's, might be conferred on her husband. She trembled so very much at first that she could scarcely

[1] There was a dispute at that time, whether a Marshal of France had a right to be styled Monseigneur in writing to him.



SIMON ARNAULD DE POMPONNE

utter a word ; but when she had recovered herself, no one could speak better ; but, after all, I think she will not succeed.

Nothing could be more elegant or better delivered than the coadjutor's speech : he touched upon the late disaster with a grace and delicacy that surprised every one ; the courtiers were particularly struck ; a variation of phrase is so novel that he gladly embraced the opportunity Voiture wished for in his letters to the Prince, and made as good a use of it as Voiture himself could have done. The King praised him highly, and said to the Dauphin, "What would you give to speak as well as the coadjutor?"—"Sire," replied M. Montausier, "this is not our business : it is enough for us if we know how to answer."

I have to thank the Grignans for all the honour they do me, and the compliments I have lately received from Germany and Versailles ; I wish the elder Grignan had some favour at Court, that I might have compliments also from Provence. M. de la Trousse has written to his wife : he is prisoner to his good friend the Marquis de Grana, by whom he is treated with the utmost politeness. He is perfectly recovered from his wound, and is in good health ; never, surely, was man so fortunate ! It looks as if the whole action was brought about purely to heighten his glory. He writes word that M. de Sanzei is certainly killed, and I think it must be so, for besides that there is not the least account of him ; he was the man most likely to sacrifice himself when he saw his regiment behave ill. However, we shall soon have certain intelligence.

I am not yet determined about my departure ; it depends on a conference that is to be held at M. de l'Hommeau's, where we shall reason upon the state of affairs. The hero's body is not carried to Turenne, as I was told, but to St. Denis, where it is to be laid at the foot of the tomb of the Bourbons. A chapel is intended to be erected for the bodies, which are to be taken out of the hole in which they now are, and M. de Turenne will be the first that will be placed in it. There are already four great captains at their master's feet, but were there not, methinks he has a right to be first. In all the places through which this illustrious corpse passes, nothing is to be heard but

cries and lamentations, people crowding to touch the bier, and processions to meet or follow it without number ; so that those who have the charge of it are obliged to proceed by night. If it comes through Paris it will occasion universal grief.

I have just been told from good authority that the courtiers, thinking to make their court to perfection, told the King that whole squadrons, and even battalions, at a time were every moment coming into Thionville and Metz, and that our loss had in fact been little or nothing. His Majesty, like a man of honour, was disgusted with such barefaced flattery, and said to them, "Why, there are more troops than I had at first." Marshal de Grammont, who has a readier turn of wit than any of the rest, answered, "May it please your Majesty, they have had little ones." These are trifles I take pleasure in hearing and repeating, when they are true.

A courier is arrived who saw Marshal de Créqui at Trèves. We are still very uneasy about Sanzei ; we hear nothing of him but what is disagreeable : some say he is a prisoner, others that he has been killed, and others again, that he is in Trèves with the Marshal. But there is no dependence on this. The enemies keep Trèves blocked up. The King told M. le Premier that he was glad to find his son was safe. M. le Premier replied, "I had rather, sire, he had been taken prisoner, or wounded : I am not pleased with this safety." The King assured him he had done his duty. They begin to talk again of the journey to Fontainebleau. I have not yet forgiven that charming place for separating us [1] ; I cannot think of that moment without emotion and grief : I must absolutely go there again to meet you, or I shall never be reconciled to it.

The Grand Duchess of Tuscany is wholly absorbed in grief at her prison of Montmartre. She has made known to all the ladies that after their first visit she wishes to receive no more, and gave the information first to Madame de Raré. This is thought unnecessarily severe ; it is true she very much resembles the Diana of Arles, but I think she can never hope to be cheerful again after the life she leads.

Cardinal de Bouillon is just arrived here. He is greatly

[1] See the Letter dated the 19th of August.

affected by your letters, and convinced of the sincerity of your sentiments ; he is almost always weeping. I intend to show him a letter from the Chevalier de Grignan, which it is impossible to read without tears. I have had very little company to-day ; I find myself very well after my medicine. I was nursed by all my friends : your picture served to enliven the conversation ; it appears every day more excellent. It is perhaps because Mignard has left off painting. Adieu, my dear and ever lovely child ; if you should find a thousand faults in this letter, excuse them, for I cannot think of reading it over again.

LETTER LXXX

To the Same

Paris, Friday, August 30, 1675.

I have determined to leave this place on the fourth of next month ; I shall go directly to Orleans, where I shall find M. d'Harrouïs, and where we shall embark on Sunday, after mass. I shall write to you on Wednesday on setting out ; I shall remain some time at Nantes, and shall then proceed to the Rocks. My return is fixed, certainly, for November, if I live. I very much regret the interruption of our correspondence, which will be a little irregular : but life is full of events that wound the heart.

I am just returned from the service performed for M. de Turenne at St. Denis. Madame d'Elbeuf came to fetch me and Cardinal de Bouillon invited me so pressingly that I could not refuse. The ceremony was extremely mournful : the corpse was placed in the middle of the church. It arrived there the night before, with such show of sorrow, that M. Boucherat, who received it, and who watched with it all night, was almost dead himself with weeping. Not only the afflicted family and the domestics were in mourning and in tears ; nothing but sighs and sobs were to be heard around.

Of his friends were present Messieurs Boucherat, de Harlai, de Barillon, and de Meaux. Madame d'Elbeuf was almoſt in hyſterics from grief: it is impossible to doubt this poor woman's sorrow. It was a melancholy ſpectacle to see all his guards ſtanding, every one with his partisan [1] on his shoulder, round the corpse they had so ill defended, and at the conclusion of mass to see them carry the bier, and place it in the chapel over the great altar, where it is deposited. The ceremony of this removal was very affecting; every one was in tears, and many were not able to reſtrain their cries. At laſt we got into the chapel, which Madame d'Elbeuf filled with the moſt piercing lamentations. When this was over, we returned to a very melancholy repaſt at Cardinal de Bouillon's, who would have us come there. He has begged me in pity to return this evening at six o'clock to take him and Madame d'Elbeuf to Vincennes: they have talked very much of you. The Cardinal says he will write to you to-day; but I shall close my packet before I go there, that I may not be uneasy about returning early: the moon will light us wherever the Cardinal pleases. I shall perhaps go to-morrow to Livri to enjoy a walk by moonlight, and to take leave of my charming abbey. The Abbé has been there these three days: he talks of nothing now but retirement; it is the fashion.

What say you to the Prince, who has raised the siege of Haguenau in the same manner as he put the enemy to flight laſt year at Oudenard? This is a fact. I have heard no news from Fontainebleau except that four tragedies of Corneille's, four of Racine's, and two comedies of Molière's are to be played there. I cannot forgive Cavoye for having gone to Fontainebleau this morning in preference to St. Denis. Adieu, my dear child; embrace me I conjure you, and tell me no more that you do not deserve my tendereſt affection. Why should you not deserve it, if it be true that you love me? On what other account can you be unworthy of it? Embrace me once more, my dear; and be contented to let me love you more than myself, since you own you love me a little.

Poor Sanzei's people are returned, and though his body

[1] A partisan was a kind of halberd.

has not been found, they believe he has been killed. They are preparing his wife to hear the sad intelligence, without yet daring to make her put on mourning. The Countess de Fiesque was thus situated for three months with her first husband, the Marquis de Piennes, who may yet return.

LETTER LXXXI

To the Same

Orleans, Wednesday, September 11, 1675.

At length, my child, I am ready to embark on our Loire ; do you remember the pretty voyage you and I once made there together ? I shall often think of it. But however terrible your Rhône may be, I wish I was as near trusting myself to its mercy. M. de la Trousse is to return hither on his parole, but is not to have the government of Philippeville. We cannot guess what fortune has in reserve for him, perhaps a musket-ball at last ; heavens forbid ! I saw the Grand Master and Madame de la Trousse the morning I set out : the latter took me to mass, and waited for my carriage at Madame de la Fayette's, where I found the Marquis de Saint Maurice, who is returned from England to assist at the funeral of his Duke : this is mere form.

I will write to you from all the places I can. You say that hope is so pleasing. Alas ! it must be so in a greater degree than you describe it, to enchant more than half the world in the manner it does. I am one of its most ardent votaries. I carry with me great uneasiness respecting my son, and leave with pain the opportunity of hearing news of the army. I sent him word the other day, as I did you, that I was going to put my head into a sack, where I should neither see nor hear anything that passes in the world.

I shall proceed in my old character, and attempt still to tell you news ; you will guess from what author it comes. It is certain that *Quanto* and her friend are really separated : but the damsel is frequently grieved, even to tears, to see how well

her friend does without her. He only regretted his liberty, and the safe retreat from the lady of the castle. Whatever was the reason, his heart was little interested in anything farther. He has met with society that pleases him ; he is gay, and delighted to be free from trouble. The fair one trembles and weeps, fearing this may imply a diminution of his flame ; and if it were otherwise, she would not be without her sorrows. Thus repose is banished. You may make your reflections on this, as on a certain truth : I believe you understand me.

With regard to England, Mademoiselle de Kéroualle [1] has been disappointed in nothing ; she wished to be the mistress of the King, and she is so. He takes up his abode with her almost every night in the face of the whole Court ; she has had a son, who has been acknowledged and presented with two duchies. She amasses treasure, and makes herself feared and respected as much as she can. But she did not foresee that she should find a young actress [2] in her way, whom the King doats on ; and she has it not in her power to withdraw him from her. He divides his care, his time, and his health, between these two. The actress is as haughty as the Duchess of Portsmouth ; she insults her, makes faces at her, attacks her, frequently steals the King from her, and boasts of his preference for her. She is young, indiscreet, confident, meretricious, and pleasant ; she sings, dances, and acts her part well. She has a son by the King, and wishes to have him acknowledged : she reasons thus : "This Duchess," says she, "pretends to be a person of quality ; she says she is related to the best families in France ; whenever any person of distinction dies, she puts herself in mourning.[3] If she be a lady of such quality, why does she demean herself to be a courtesan ? She ought to be ashamed of herself. As for me, it is my profession ; I do not pretend

[1] Louise Renée de Penancoët de Kéroualle, created Duchess of Portsmouth in England in 1672, and Duchess d'Aubigny in France in 1684 in her own right and that of Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond, her son.

[2] Nell Gwyn.

[3] Mademoiselle Kéroualle went into mourning for the King of Sweden ; a little after, the King of Portugal died. Her rival appeared in a mourning coach, and made her this proposal : "Let us agree to divide the world : you shall have the kings of the north, and I the kings of the south."

to anything better. The King maintains me, and I am constant to him at present. He has a son by me : I say he ought to acknowledge him, and I am sure he will, for he loves me as well as he does Portsmouth." This creature gets the upper hand, and discountenances and embarrasses the Duchess extremely. I like these original characters. I could find nothing better to send you from Orleans ; but this is at least truth.

I am extremely well, my child ; and I find the convenience of being a substance that thinks, and reads : were it not for these privileges, our good Abbé would amuse me very little. You know he is generally employed in admiring the *beautiful eyes of his casket* ; but while he is counting them over, and feasting his own eyes with them, Cardinal Commendon [1] is a very agreeable companion to me. The weather and the roads are extremely pleasant : we have such clear bright days, as we used to compare to crystal, in which we are neither sensible of cold nor heat. Our equipage would carry us very well by land ; it is for our amusement we go by water.

To prevent your inquietude, I am in perfect health ; I am very regular in the management of it, with a view to please you. Be not in pain about Maria : she does everything for me that Helen could do. I foresee your inquietude. I love you, my dearest, and my tenderness is the most delightful employment of my mind.

I do not boast of a friendship with M. le Premier, but I have seen him frequently at M. de la Rochefoucauld's, at Madame de Lavardin's, at his own house, and twice at mine. He finds me with his friends, and you know the kind of reverberations that causes.

[1] The *Life of Cardinal Commendon*, by Flechier. He was a Venetian. At the end of the sixteenth century he was sent by the Court of Rome from Germany to Poland, where he was sufficiently skilful to make the decrees of the Council of Trent received. His life, which is here alluded to, is a translation from the Latin of Gratiani.

LETTER LXXXII

To the Same.

Tuesday, September 17, 1675.

Here is an odd date for you :

Je suis dans un batteau,
Dans le courant de l'eau,
Fort loin de mon chateau.[1]

I think I might add,

Ah quelle foliet [2]

for the water is so very low, and we are so often aground, that I heartily wish for my carriage again, but that is out of reach for some time. The water becomes dull when one is alone. A Count des Chapelles, and a Mademoiselle de Sévigné, are wanting to enliven the scene. In short, it is mere folly to take a boat at Orleans, or even at Paris ; but it is the fashion, as it is at Chartres to buy chaplets. I told you I saw the Abbé d'Effiat at his noble mansion. I wrote to you from Tours, from thence we went to Saumur, where we saw Vineuil, and wept again over M. de Turenne. He seems greatly affected with his loss ; you will pity him when I tell you he is in a place where no one ever saw this hero. Vineuil is grown very old, very phthisicky, very drivelling, and very devout ; but he is still witty : he sends you a thousand and a thousand compliments. It is thirty leagues from Saumur to Nantes : we determined to go there in two days, and to get into Nantes on this day : with this view we were upon the water some part of the night ; but unfortunately we ran aground about two hundred yards from the place where we were to go ashore to sleep, and could not get out of the boat ; so we put back and landed at another place, and, following the barking of a dog, we got about midnight to a

[1] From the bottom of a boat,
On the water afloat
Not a house in our sight,
[2] This is folly outright.

little hut, but the most wretched place you can possibly conceive: there we found two or three old women spinning, and some fresh straw, upon which we all lay down without taking off our clothes. I should have laughed heartily at this scene, had it not been for thinking of our poor Abbé, whom I was vexed to have exposed to such a fatiguing journey. At daybreak we re-embarked, but were again so completely stranded, that it was above an hour before we could get afloat again; however, we were resolved to get to Nantes, though against both wind and tide. We were forced to row all the way. When we got there, I received your letters; and as I find the post must pass through Ingrande, I shall leave this little note by the way. I am very well, and only want somebody to chat with. I shall write to you from Nantes, as you may suppose. I am very impatient to hear from you, and about M. de Luxembourg and his army: for my head has been in a sack these nine days. The History of the Crusades is very amusing, particularly to those who have read Tasso, and who see their old friends again in prose and in history; but with respect to the author's style, I am his very humble servant. The *Life of Origen* is divine.[1]

LETTER LXXXIII

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, October 13, 1675.

You say very justly, my dear, that the dates contribute little to make the letters of those we love agreeable. Why should our attention be confined to public affairs? Your health, your family, your most trifling actions, your sentiments, it is these that interest me; and I am so well persuaded that you are of my way of thinking, that I make no scruple of talking to you of the Rocks, of Mademoiselle du Plessis, of

[1] This is the work of Dufosse, of Port Royal. It had just been published, with the *Life of Tertullian*, by the same author.

my walks, of my woods, of the affairs of our Abbé, and of Copenhagen, when occasion offers. You may therefore firmly believe that everything that comes from you is of consequence to me, and that I am pleased to know everything, even to your tapestry ; and if you want a fresh supply of needles to work with, I can supply you with some admirable ones. I was employed yesterday on a piece of work as tedious as the company I had : I never work but when I have company ; when I am alone, I walk, I read, or I write. La Plessis incommodes me no more than Maria ; I am so happy as to have no inclination to listen to anything she says, and find as little interruption from her presence, as you do from some whom you have the same kind of regard for. In other respects, she has the best sentiments in the world ; I admire how all her good qualities are spoiled by her impertinent and ridiculous manners. It is quite laughable to hear what she says of my patience in bearing with her ; how she explains it ; and the obligations she fancies it lays her under to attach herself to me ; and how I serve her for an excuse for not visiting her friends at Vitré. It would make you smile, to observe her little arts to satisfy her vanity (for vanity is the growth of every soil) ; and her affected fears that I am growing jealous of a nun of Vitré, for whom she has a partiality. All this would make an excellent farce.

I must tell you the news of this province. M. de Chaulnes is at Rennes with a great number of troops. He has declared, that if the inhabitants offer to leave it, or to raise the least disturbance, he will take away the Parliament from that city for ten years. The fear of this makes them bear with everything. I have not yet heard how these warlike personages behave to the poor citizens. We expect Madame de Chaulnes, who is coming to see the Princess at Vitré : we are in safety under her protection ; but I can assure you, that if I only were here, M. de Chaulnes would think it a pleasure to show his respect for me ; this is the only circumstance in which I could answer for him. I beg you to be under no uneasiness ; I am in safety here, as in a province which you say belongs to me.

I shall not thank d'Hacqueville for writing to you three times a week, it would be laughing at him ; the praises he merits upon that subject are far from my thoughts. He writes to me twice in the week ; I shall abridge one of these by my own example, out of pure friendship for him, wishing to have very little part in the murder we are all committing on him : he will die, and then we shall be in despair : it would be an irreparable loss, and all the d'Hacquevilles in the world would not make amends for it ; and he has given me great pleasure by removing the resentment I felt for Cardinal d'Estrées. He informs me that our Cardinal has been refused in a full consistory on his own letter ; and that, after this last ceremony, there is nothing more to fear : so that he is now, for the third time, a Cardinal against his will ; at least for these two last times ; for the first time, I believe, he was not much displeased. Write and rally him upon this happy disappointment : d'Hacqueville is transported, and I love him for it. I often receive notes from our dear Cardinal, and write to him in return : I keep this little correspondence very secret and mysterious ; it is the more dear to me.

You are not much afraid of Ruyter.[1] Ruyter is, however, the god of battles. Guitant is unable to resist him : but, in reality, the King's star resists him. There never was so fixed a star : it dispersed the great fleet last year ; killed M. de Lorraine ; repulsed Montecuculi ; and will make peace, through the marriage of Prince Charles. I mentioned this last circumstance the other day to Madame de Tarente ; she told me that he was already married to the Empress dowager ; and that this marriage, though it has not been declared, would prevent the other. You will see that she will die, if her life occasions any inconvenience. You reason so well upon affairs of state, that it is easy to see you are become a politician in your government. I have written to the beautiful Princess de Vaudemont ; she is unhappy and I am grieved for her, for she is very amiable. I dared not write to Madame de l'Islebonne, but you have inspired me with courage. I fear little Coulanges is not with you ; his wife

[1] Admiral of the Dutch fleet.

has written to me sadly out of spirits ; she is at Lyons, where she thinks she shall stay the winter : it is quite high treason in her opinion not to be at Paris : she tells me you have been very sociable together. La Trousse is at Paris, and at court, overwhelmed with caresses and praises ; his way of receiving them is calculated to augment them. It is said that he will have Froulai's situation ; if it should be so, there will be a remove in that company, and I have desired our friend d'Hacqueville to pay a little attention to it, for the sake of our poor guidon, who languishes in his little post. I have sent to him to come hither : I want to marry him to a little damsel, who is a Jewess by birth ; but, in my opinion, money is always of a good family. This is a castle in the air ; I depend on nothing, after having failed of Mademoiselle d'Eubonne. Madame de Villars writes to me of fresh wonders performed by the Chevalier de Grignan ; I believe they are only the accounts of his former actions renewed : but he has really the best reputation that can be desired.

I must tell you a handsome proceeding of the Attorney-General.[1] He had an estate of the house of Bellièvre, which was legally made over to him, as a gift : but he returned it to the creditors. He said he could not accept such a present, when he considered that the creditors, who were honest men, would be injured by it. This is very heroical.

I dare not think of seeing you ; when this hope sinks too deeply into my heart, and is so unlikely to be gratified, it does me too much harm. I remember still what I suffered during the illness of my poor aunt ; and how soon the sight of you made me forget that grief : I have not yet a prospect of receiving so much joy. You assure me that you are extremely well ; I pray God that your health may continue : I have this subject very much at heart. As for me, I am in perfect health : you would much approve my sobriety, the exercise I take, and my confining myself, like a Carmelite, to seven hours' sleep. This austere life pleases me ; it resembles the barrenness of the country. I do not grow fat ; and the air is so thick and so soft, that my complexion, which many have so

[1] Achilles de Harlai, afterwards first President.

long pretended to admire, is not yet changed. I wish you could pass an evening here; you would find it preferable to all the pomades you can use. I have ten workmen, who amuse me extremely. Rahuel and Pilois are each in their proper places. You ought to be convinced of my regard by the trifles with which I fill my letters. Since I complained in verse, of the rain, the weather has been delightful, and I therefore praise it in prose.

Our province is so much taken up with punishments, that there is no thought of visits; and, without pretending to haughtiness, I am very much pleased at it. Do you remember when we thought there was nothing so good in the country as disagreeable company, for the pleasure of seeing them depart? It is a pleasure I shall not have this year.

LETTER LXXXIV

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, November 24, 1675.

A little patience would save a great deal of vexation. Time robs us of as much as it gives; you know we have always found it a mere shuffler, placing and displacing, ordering and disordering, imprinting and effacing, bringing together and separating, and in short, rendering all things good and bad, in such a manner that it is hardly possible to know them again. Time shows respect to nothing but our friendship, and that it will always respect. But, my dear child, whither am I got? What a strange digression is this! I was only going to tell you, that the courier came in so late, that your letters were kept back one post, and that the next I had two together; and see what a roundabout mode I have taken. Well, no matter! between friends one may be allowed to let the pen take its own course. I am sure mine is very seldom curbed.

They were surprised at M. de Pomponne's, that the town-house at Aix, which appeared to you like *a den of thieves*

should have behaved so much to your satisfaction. I think it is better it should be so, for the sake of peace. But the question is, whether you would not be more amused by being engaged in war, where you always come off victor : I know at least how you stand with respect to a general peace. I shall not write anything to Paris concerning your warlike humour, lest M. de Pomponne, who is *amico di pace e di riposo*, should be angry with you. D'Hacqueville assures me that we cannot wish to be on better terms than we are with that family ; if you are pleased with it, write to M. de Pomponne and Madame de Vins ; when we intend to give pleasure to a person, we always like to know how we have succeeded.

Little de Marsan has committed the same fault in his way, that M. de Lauzun did, that is, delayed and talked too much of his marriage. Madame la Maréchale d'Aumont had given him five hundred thousand crowns ; but M. le Tellier does not wish it, and the King has forbidden it to take place. I am told, however, that the Maréchale spoke very well to the King, and that M. de Marsan said to him : " Sire, as I found that my services deserved no recompense from you, I endeavoured to place myself in a situation where I might become useful to you in future, without troubling you with my wretched fortune."

The other day the Queen missed going to mass, and lost twenty thousand crowns in one morning. The King said to her, " Let us calculate, Madam, how much this is a year." And M. de Montausier asked her the next day, if she intended staying away from mass for the hoca again ; upon which she was in a great passion. I have heard these stories from persons who come from Versailles, and who collect them on purpose for me. I am quite in the dark respecting the mysterious present made by *Quantova* to M. de Marsillac. I like your parody extremely, it is both humorous and just. I sing it admirably, but no one hears me ; do you not think there is madness or folly in singing by one's self in a wood ? I am perfectly persuaded of the Bishop's [1] vow in the battle ;

[1] Of Marseilles, who was then Ambassador to the King of Poland, whose dominions were invaded by the Turks.

e fece voto, e fu liberato [1] ; but mark the end, *passato il pericolo, schernito il santo.*[2] I fancy he is very much disturbed about the colour of his hat : thank God he will not have ours,[3] it is too well fixed on a much worthier head. M. de Cossé hates the Pope, and I love him.

You are very humorous upon our misfortunes ; but we have no more breakings on the wheel now, except one in a week or ten days, just to keep the executioner's hand in : in short, hanging seems to be a kind of deliverance here from greater miseries. I have a very different idea of justice and punishment, since my being here, to what I had before ; and I look upon your galley-slaves as a set of happy people, who have retired from the world to lead a life of ease and tranquillity : we have sent you a few hundreds from hence, but those who are left behind are much more wretched. I told you I was afraid they would put down our states, by way of punishment again ; but they are assembled and have made a gift of three millions, as if it was nothing ; we are above thinking of the trifling circumstances of not being able to raise it ; that is beneath our consideration. You ask me if we are really ruined ; yes, and no ; if we did not wish to leave the place, we might live here for nothing, for we can dispose of nothing, and we can buy nothing ; but, as for money, there is none to be found in the province.

LETTER LXXXV

To the Same

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 4, 1675.

I write to-day upon the point of a needle ; for I now receive no letters from you but on a Friday, and then I have

[1] He made a vow, and was liberated.

[2] The danger past, he threw aside the Saint.

[3] Meaning that of the Cardinal de Retz, for which the Bishop of Marseilles and his friends had made great interest, when His Eminence had written to the Pope for leave to resign it.

two at once. As I was returning from my walk yesterday, I met the poor *frater*,[1] at the end of the mall, who immediately fell upon his knees, so conscious of having done wrong in having been three weeks under ground, singing matins, that he thought he dared not approach me otherwise. I had resolved to scold him heartily, but I was so glad to see him that I could not find an angry word to use. You know how entertaining he is; he embraced me a thousand times, and gave me the worst reasons in the world; which, however, I received as sterling: we chat, we read, we walk, and we wear away the year; or rather, what is left of it. We are determined to dispose of our paltry *guidonage* as well as we can, if the King will permit. M. de Lauzun may find a purchaser for his place, and we will endeavour to do the same for ours, and then we may perhaps agree together afterwards.

We are in doleful dumps about the troops that are pouring in upon us on all sides, under M. de Pommereuil. This has been a severe stroke to our officers: they are mortified in their turn, especially the governor, who did not expect such an answer to the present of the three millions. M. de St. Malo is returned; he met with a very indifferent reception at the states: they complain that he has made a bad bargain at St. Germain; he ought, at least, to have remained at Court, to see what he could do towards an abatement of these hardships. M. de Rohan is engaged, and not yet come back, nor perhaps does he intend it. M. de Coulanges writes me word that he has seen the Chevalier de Grignan, who is very dissatisfied at my absence; I am more vexed than I have ever been at not being at Paris, that I might have the pleasure of seeing and chatting with him. But do you know, my dear, that his regiment is one of those that are to be sent into this province? It would be an odd circumstance if we should see the Chevalier here: I should receive him with great joy. I suppose you will not want for news from Paris, now the Chevalier is there. M. de Coulanges is greatly disgusted. M. le Tellier, it seems, has opened his purse-strings and purchased for Bagnol the post of Master of the Requests,

[1] M. de Sévigné.



CHARLES DE SÉVIGNÉ

by Sebastien Bourdon

(the property of La Comtesse de Nétumières)

and at the same time given him another place which he had promised to M. de Coulanges, and which is worth, without ſtirring out of Paris, more than two thousand livres a year : this is a ſenſible mortification for Coulanges ; and if Madame de Coulanges cannot bring her uncle to another way of thinking, in a conference she is ſhortly to have with him on the ſubject, Coulanges is reſolved to diſpoſe of his place immediately : he has written to me about it, and ſeems very much nettled. You will know the hopes that are entertained of peace : the newspapers cannot fail to inform you of this, nor of the lamentations of our unfortunate province. The Cardinal writes me word that he has ſeen the Count de Sault, Renti, and Biron : he is ſo much afraid of being the object of public curioſity, that he is gone to ſpend the advent at Saint Michael. Talk to me of yourſelf, my deareſt child ; how are you ? is your complexion injured ? are you handſome when you please ? I am for ever thinking of you, and you cannot oblige me more than by telling me everything that relates to you. But I reſign my pen to the honeſt lad at my elbow, and embrace you with all my heart.

From M. de Sévigné

What does the good lady mean by her "honeſt lad ?" I am treated as though I were not fit to throw to the dogs, because I was a fortnight traverſing a hundred and fifty leagues of ground ; and if I did ſtop a little by the way, pray where is the great harm of it ? But I am ſcolded and ſtormed at, because they cannot enjoy enough of my delightful company ; this is the misfortune of being too charming ! Ah, my dear father, why did you make me ſo handſome ?

I have received your kind letter, and the ſteady and tender affection you have always ſhown me, makes me eaſily believe that you take as much intereſt in my affairs as you ſay you do : my mother has informed you exactly how they ſtand. You may ſuppoſe I ſhall hardly purchaſe M. de Lauzun's poſt, nor run into ruin for the ſake of two ſubaltern ſituations. This is the extremity to which I am reduced by not taking your advice, in preference to any other ; but I really think

the crime may very well be expiated by seven years of purgatory, six of which I have already passed under M. de la Trousse, and that it does not merit an eternity of torments, like that which threatens me, unless I am speedily delivered by Providence : however, for this once I will follow the advice of the wise heads who govern us. I heard of all your triumphs in Provence, and it is impossible to say how sensibly they affected me. I embrace you most sincerely and tenderly, my dear little sister. Consider how you have always behaved towards me : consider how much you have always preferred my interest to your own : consider how amiable and excellent you appear in the eyes of every one ; and then judge of my sentiments towards you.

Madame de Sévigné continues

My dear child, Bourdelot has sent me some verses he has made in praise of the Prince and the Duke ; he sends them to you also.[1] He has written that he is no poet, and I am almost tempted to ask him, " Why then you do write verses ? who obliges you to do it ? " He calls me the mother of Love, but it is to no purpose. I think his verses very poor. I know not whether praise makes my heart ache, as it will the Prince's. Madame de Villars embraces and loves you : what think you of this journey ? I trust to you to say a word for me to the mournful traveller. I embrace the poor little Dague. The good Abbé is devoted to you, and am I not also, my beloved child, devoted to you ?

[1] The Abbé Bourdelot, physician to the great Condé, pleased him infinitely by his gaiety, and even by his familiarity. Queen Christina liked him extremely. She took it into her head to learn to swear, wishing, she said, to know everything. She selected Bourdelot for her instructor. I know none of his verses, but those he made upon the Duke, who had sent him some game : " Bourdelot," says he, " is a second Orpheus :

Il a deja tiré des ames des enfers,
Et dejà le gibier vient au son de sa lyre."

" He has already drawn souls from the infernal regions, and game comes already to the sound of his lyre."

LETTER LXXXVI

To the Same

The Rocks, Tuesday, Christmas Day, 1675.

This is a day, my dear child, in which I have given my pen liberty to write what it pleases, it chooses to begin by the joy I feel at having left Vitré, and being returned hither in peace and repose, after two tedious days of talk, ceremony, and patience, in listening to all the idle news that is prepared for Paris ; I had the satisfaction, however, to find fault with some of it, particularly the ball M. de St. Malo gave the States. Madame de Tarente laughed heartily to see me so warm and full of my reasons of disapprobation. But I had rather be in these woods in the manner you know, than be at Vitré with the air of a fine lady. The good Princess [1] went to her religious assembly : I heard them all singing one another deaf.[2] I felt real pleasure in hearing mass after it ; I have not for a long time been so much pleased with being a good Catholic. I dined with the minister : my son disputed like a demon. I went to vespers in the pure spirit of opposition : this has taught me a little to comprehend the sacred obstinacy of martyrdom.

My son is gone to Rennes to see the governor. Last night we performed our devotions in our fine chapel. I have still the little country lass, who is very pretty. Her house borders on my park. The mother is gone to Rennes, and I have kept the daughter with me. She plays at trictrac and at reversis, is agreeable enough, and has great vivacity and cheerfulness of manner. Her name is Janette ; she incommodes me a little, like Fidele. La Plessis has an ague. It is amusing to see how angry and jealous she is when she finds this girl here, and the strife there is between them to hold my cane or my muff. But enough of this : I have made a great deal out of nothing.

[1] Madame de Tarente. She was a Protestant.

[2] *Chanter les oreilles.* An expression of Panurge in Rabelais.

The Forbins have an affair of great importance on the subject of little Janson,[1] who has killed Chassingrimon, the nephew of M. de la Feuillade, in a duel. This affair is before the Parliament ; and the King has said, that if justice had been done on the death of Château-Vilain, there would not have been so many duels since. Thus is another youth obliged, like the rest, to leave France, and to take refuge in a foreign country. This is a house of great intrigue.

What is your opinion of poor Madame de Puisieux ? Her cold has fallen upon her lungs. This disorder has been very prevalent here. Our relation Sanzei died of it in three days : he was a great favourite with me, and I am grieved at his death. Desire d'Hacqueville to give your compliments to the Raré : nothing more is necessary. The Cardinal has entrusted me with the secret of his being at Saint Michael to pass the holidays ; but he desires me to say nothing of it for fear of giving offence. It was impossible for me to forbear communicating to him the article from Rome in your last letter. It is arranged with perfect harmony : I am sure he will think it inimitable, and that he will recognize the beauties of the style and sentiments of his dear niece.

Madame de Coulanges has had a long conversation with her fat cousin,[2] which she hopes will be very much to the advantage of M. de Coulanges. Has not the great lady written to you ? Madame de Vins has just written me a very pretty letter, and, as you say, as full of flattery as herself. She tells me, the only way not to wish for my friendship, is never to have seen me. The whole letter is in the same strain : it is a bundle of feathers, instead of a bundle of thorns.

Do you know de Boulai ? [3] I believe you do. He met

[1] The same who, after having retired to Germany, where he served at the siege of Vienna, and the taking of Buda, returned to France under the name of Count de Rosemberg shortly after war was declared between that country and France. He was employed in a foreign regiment, and was dangerously wounded at the battle of Marseilles. He afterwards retired to the monastery of La Trappe, where he took his vows the 7th of December, 1703, under the name of Brother Arsene, and was one of the nine monks who were sent the following year into Tuscany to establish the ancient observance of Cîteaux in a monastery of the same order.

[2] M. de Louvois.

[3] He was the *Mist*, and an excellent companion.

Madame de Courcelles [1] by accident, to see her and to adore her was the same thing ; a fancy took them to go to Geneva, where they are at present, and from whence he has written Manicamp [2] the most entertaining letter in the world. Madame de Mazarin, on her part, is rambling about the wide world : it is thought she is in England, where you know there is neither priest, nor faith, nor law ; but I do not believe it is true that, as the song says,[3] she is for driving the King away too.

We are grieved for Jabac : what a foolish discovery and how disagreeable are old sins ! [4] The good Abbé will desire Rousseau to endeavour to pacify him till our return. Is it not insulting a lady of your rank to occupy your time with such nonsense as this ? I say "as this", because there is nonsense of a different kind. Yours is always entertaining ; but mere impertinences, without rhyme or reason, though ridiculous, are not diverting. I conclude with wishing you a merry festival,[5] and assuring you, that I love you with an affection which will in all probability accompany me *in articulo mortis*.[6]

Did I tell you that Madame de Fontenaux paid a visit to Madame de Coulanges, merely to see your picture ? No pilgrimage was ever undertaken in honour of a lovelier saint.

LETTER LXXXVII

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, January 19, 1676.

I am much better, my dear ; this same stiff neck was in truth a very pretty fit of rheumatism ; it is a disorder attended

[1] Marie Sidonia de Lénoncourt.
[2] M. de Longueval-Manicamp, the intimate friend of M. de Boulai.
[3] *Chanson de Blot.*
[4] She means an old debt for goods delivered to Madame de Grignan.
[5] The custom of wishing a merry festival (*souhaiter les bonnes fêtes*) at Christmas and Easter, is still retained in many provinces, and particularly in Provence.
[6] Till death.

with violent pain, and want of rest and sleep ; but it gives no apprehension respecting the consequences. This is the eighth day ; a gentle dose of medicine and a sudorific will restore me again. I have been bled once in the foot, and now abstinence and patience will put the finishing stroke to the disorder. Larméchin is very attentive, and has not quitted me night or day.

I read your letters yesterday, my child, with extreme pleasure ; they are a delightful conversation : I desire you will not pretend to tell me that your success in Provence is a matter of indifference to you ; I know not what is pleasing, if so complete a victory is not ; which, at the same time, is attended with the most agreeable and honourable consequences on your side. I had the pleasure of hearing this agreeable intelligence a little before you ; and the assembly of the noblesse has completed my satisfaction : I send you M. de Pomponne's letter ; I think nothing can exceed his friendship. D'Hacqueville writes me word that our Cardinal has an inflammation on his lungs : I am much more uneasy about him than myself. I would, with great pleasure, write you twenty or thirty pages, but it is really more than I can do at present. My son shall fill up the rest. Adieu, my dearest child, I embrace you to-day with my right hand.

From M. de Sévigné

You see, my dear sister, by what my mother writes, the true state of her health, and how little reason there is to be alarmed at her present disorder, which begins to go off, and to be relieved by gentle sweats ; her sufferings were so great, that it cut us to the soul to witness them. I hope you do me justice to believe, that I do all in my power to assist and amuse her. I heartily wish I could be of any real service, but unfortunately, I am good for nothing, unless for having brought Larméchin, who does wonders day and night. Your letters are very necessary, and very efficacious, in diverting the pains of our dear patient. It is a pity we cannot receive them oftener than once a week. We do not give much credit to your philosophical notions about your affairs in Provence ; you may

see by M. de Coëtquen's affair, of which I informed you in my last, that yours is not the only province where there are intrigues and cabals. Is it not very high of d'Hacqueville, to write us an account of this affair, from Paris, when we are but seven leagues from Rennes, as if he thought we never heard anything of our own savage country?

You have doubtless heard of the disputes that happened at the nuptials of La Mothe, which were not inferior to those at the marriage of Thetis; for Discord with her snaky locks had insinuated herself amongst our Duchesses and Princesses, who are the goddesses of the earth; but, at length, all is calmed, and there is no more talk of war; what we have at present upon our hands [1] is fully sufficient. We have read the opera; but you never saw tastes so corrupted as ours are become, since we have been in Brittany. We look upon the funeral oration of M. de Tulle as extremely beautiful, and we think the opera [2] of this year infinitely superior to any we have had before. As we did not get it till yesterday, we have only read the prologue and the first act, which we honour with our approbation; but pray do not think that we do the same with respect to the continuation of *Pharamond*; we anathematize everything that is not written by Calprenede.

Adieu, my dear sister; we endeavour to amuse our good mother as much as possible, which is all that she now stands in need of, for the disorder will take its course, and we do not think she will be quite well for these three weeks. Her fever left her precisely at the seventh day, which plainly shows you there is no danger. Pray do not write us any letters that may make us uneasy, they will come unseasonably, and the vexation of knowing that you have been alarmed for her, will not tend to your dear mother's recovery.

A thousand compliments to M. de Grignan and to his beard.

[1] With the Dutch, the Spaniards, and the Germans.
[2] *Atys*, written by Quinault.

LETTER LXXXVIII

To the Same—dictated by Madame de Sévigné, written by her son

The Rocks, Wednesday, January 29, 1676.

You will think it very odd, my child, when I tell you that I am quite cured, that I have neither fever nor pain, and yet do not write to you : but the very reason of this is because I am cured. My pains are turned to a swelling, so that my poor hand is not capable even of scrawling, as it has done for some days past. But this is an inconvenience that will not last long. I have now nothing left to do but to comfort myself for the uneasiness my bed has given me for this fortnight past. I begin to walk about my room, I recover my strength : this is a delightful situation compared with my former one, and therefore I entreat you to be under no uneasiness on my account, while we think ourselves so happy.

I have read your two letters : they are divine ; you give me admirable accounts ; if ever my hand is at liberty again, I will certainly answer them. In the meantime, be assured that I lose nothing either in point of correspondence or friendship. One of the greatest pleasures I had in my recovery was the thought of its relieving you from the uneasiness you endured, which now you ought to throw entirely aside, since we have told you the real truth, and that I am now on the high road to health. I embrace you, my dearest child, from the bottom of my heart ; *the worthy* [1] does the same ;—and as to me, my dear sister,[2] you will believe I am not behindhand. I have nothing to say to you to-day for myself, except that I am very happy that we are so well out of this affair.

[1] The Abbé de Coulanges.

[2] This is written by M. de Sévigné as from himself.

LETTER LXXXIX

To the Same—Madame de Sévigné dictates, her son writes

The Rocks, Monday, February 3, 1676.

Guess, my dear child, what it is that comes the quickeſt, and goes off the sloweſt ; that brings you the neareſt to health, and removes you the fartheſt from it ; that throws you into the moſt agreeable situation imaginable, and at the same time hinders you from enjoying it ; that flatters you with the moſt pleasing hopes, and keeps you the longeſt from the accomplishment of them. Cannot you guess ? Do you give it up ? Why, it is the rheumatism. I have had it these three and twenty days ; since the fourteenth day, I have been free from fever and pain : and in this delightful situation, thinking myself ſtrong enough to walk, which is the summit of my wishes, I find myself swelled all over, feet, legs, hands, arms ; and this swelling, which they call my cure, and in reality is so, is the sole occasion of my present vexation. Were I good for anything, I might gain myself some credit by it. However, I believe the enemy is conquered, and that in two days I shall be able to walk. Larméchin gives me great hope of this. I every day receive letters from our friends at Paris, congratulating me on my recovery. I have taken M. de Lorme's opening powders, which have been of great service to me ; I am going to take them again : they are a never-failing remedy in these cases. After this attack, I am promised an eternal succession of health. God grant it. My firſt ſtep will be to return to Paris ; I desire you, therefore, my dear, to calm all your fears : you see what a faithful account we have given you of the affair ; let that make you easy.

Before this packet is sealed up, I shall venture to ask my great hand if it will please to write a line to you. I am afraid it will not comply ; but I do not know, perhaps in two hours it may.

Adieu, my dear and best beloved child; let me beg you to have a reverential awe of the thing called rheumatism; this, methinks, is the most important business I have to recommend to you at present. The *frater* has been railing at you this week past for speaking against M. de Lorme's powders when you were at Paris.

From M. de Sévigné

Had my mother yielded to the regimen prescribed her by that honest man, and taken his powders once a month, as he wished her to do, she would not have had this disorder, which is wholly owing to repletion of humours: but it was killing her to advise her to try a single dose; and yet, after all, this dreadful medicine that makes people shudder at its very name is composed of antimony, which is an emetic, and operates as gently, and with as much safety, as a glass of any of the medicinal waters, without the least griping or pain, and has no other effect than that of making the head light, and capacitating it for making verses, if you chose to attempt it: but, no, it must not be taken: "Are you mad, brother, to think of giving my mother antimony? She wants nothing but a little dieting, and a cooling medicine occasionally": this was your ladyship's strain. Your servant, my little sister; I am quite angry when I think that we might have saved our mother this terrible disorder by prevailing on her to have taken this powder, which is the most speedy restorative in the world, whatever she may be pleased to say against it in her impatience.

"Are you fools, children," says my mother, "to think that a disease is to be put out of its course? Must not the will of God be done? Is it not our duty to submit?" This is talking like a very good Christian; but still, I say, give me de Lorme's powders.

LETTER XC

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, February 23, 1676.

You are brought to bed at the end of eight months, my dear child : what a happiness you are so well ! But what a pity it will be to lose your little boy ! You, who are so prudent, and apt to condemn others for want of care, must take it in your head to wash your feet ! when you had carried the good work on so well, and for so long a time, how could you think of risking it, and your life into the bargain ? But, after all, God be praised, my child, that you have got so well over it ; you wanted no help. You may imagine with what impatience I wait for a second packet, to hear more particularly of your health, and how full my head will be of this lying-in and all its circumstances. I thank you for your three lines, and you, my dear Count, for the trouble you took in giving me so speedy and accurate an account. You know what the health of your dear wife is to me : but you let her write too much. And so it was this same washing of the feet, it seems, that brought on the labour. I cannot get over the loss of the poor infant, and I stand in need of all your Christian reflections to support me ; for, say as you please, you will never be able to save its life at eight months. I should have been afraid her premature labour had been occasioned by the alarm she was under on account of my illness, had I not known there was a fortnight's interval. However, God be praised a thousand and a thousand times, since my dear Countess is well. My life hangs upon her health, therefore let me recommend it to your particular care, my dear Count, and I accept very heartily of the rendezvous at Grignan.

LETTER XCI

To the Same

The Rocks, Sunday, March 8, 1676.

You may indeed believe, my child, that if my hand could write to anyone, it would be to you ; but it is in vain to propose it : it will not obey me. This tedious privation afflicts me. I have not written a line to Paris, except to d'Hacqueville the other day, to thank him for Davoneau's letter, with which I was transported with joy ; and this was on your account, for I think of no one else at present. I reserve my scrawl entirely for you, and notwithstanding your decision on the question, I believe you had rather see that than none at all : the rest therefore must excuse me :

Car je n'ai qu'un filet de voix.
Et ne chante que pour Sylvie.[1]

But here comes my pretty little secretary very opportunely to relieve my trembling hand.

You are very good, my child, in offering to come and spend the summer with me ; I firmly believe you would do as you say, and were it not for the little uneasiness I still suffer, I should very contentedly see our good Abbé set out by himself, a fortnight hence, and remain in this delightful desert with so sweet a companion the whole summer ; but M. de Mirepoix's affair decides me, and I must now hobble to Paris. When I was at the worst, I said no one was more likely than yourself, if you knew how ill I was, to come and surprise me some morning at the foot of my bed. You see, my dear, what an opinion I have of your affection, and what confidence I repose in you.

I assure you, my dear, I am so much delighted with the good state of your health, that it encourages me to endeavour to perfect mine ; but for this pleasing stimulus, I should have been wholly indifferent about it : but I foresee so many things which may give me the pleasure of seeing, and of serving you,

[1] For I have but a weak voice, and I sing only for Sylvia.

that I do not hesitate to bestow all my attention on the re-establishment of my health. I am interested in the life of the little boy : I should be very sorry if he were to die. You have given me a charming picture of de Vardes ; you want no assistant, for your pencil is not inferior to Mignard's. I should have thought from his (Vardes) confusion that he was going to be put upon the wheel ; but I now see, as no one was present but you, that he owed the honour of this embarrassment to his being eleven years in the country. I think Cardinal de Bonzi has no reason to complain, if that be all that is said of him. I am sorry the good Sanzie is dead ; it was a pleasure to see him play at piquet, as coldly and drily as if he had been really in his coffin.

I am very desirous that you should write to the good Princess ; I am afraid you did not sufficiently enter into the friendliness of her letters. Let me know how you are after your sitting up : is your complexion uninjured ? I love to hear about your person : my face within this fortnight is the same as ever it was ; I am very little fallen away, and I walk upon my *hind feet* like other people. I eat with an appetite, but have bid adieu to suppers for ever ; so that excepting my swelled hands, a few flying pains that come and go, and serve to remind me of my dear rheumatism, I am no longer an object worthy of your solicitude. Feel no more anxiety then upon my account, I conjure you, and be assured that in whatever state I may be, and however I may have been, your remembrance and your love are my sole occupations.

I have just received a letter from the Cardinal, who assures me that he is much better ; his health is very dear to me. I have likewise received a thousand congratulations from the dear Grignans. The Chevalier had every reason to expect promotion, after his conversation with the King. Adieu, my dearest ; be under no apprehension of a relapse on my part. My excessive carelessness with respect to my health is changed to the greatest timidity. Do you not pity poor Lauzun for not being able to work at his hole [1] any longer ? Do you not

[1] M. de Lauzun was discovered attempting to make a hole in the wall of the room where he was confined at Pignerol.

think he will dash his brains out against the wall? I am still as much delighted as ever with the *Moral Essays*, and you were mistaken in supposing that the sentiments of a certain person would make me alter mine. The treatise on tempting God presses us a little to do for our salvation what we often do out of self-love. Corbinelli says "that our friends are Jesuits in this respect". I think the coadjutor and you are admirable on this subject: if you said your prayers every day, you would be perfect saints; but you will not, and this is an example of that stubborn will which St. Augustine describes so well in his *Confessions*. I admire, my dear, how far my love of talking has carried me.

LETTER XCII

From Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan

The Rocks, Sunday, March 22, 1676.

I am in very good health, my dear, but in my rebellious hands there is neither rhyme nor reason, I therefore employ the little girl for the last time: she is the sweetest girl in the world; I know not what I should have done without her. She reads whatever I wish, and you see how she writes; she loves me, is very obliging, and likes to talk of Madame de Grignan; in short, I beg you to love her for my sake.

The Little Girl for Herself

I should be too happy, Madame, were that the case: I dare say you envy me the pleasure of being constantly about my lady, your mother: she made me write all this in praise of myself. I am perfectly ashamed of it, and am at the same time grieved at the thoughts of her departure.

Continued for Madame de Sévigné

My little girl wished to talk to you a little: but now I return to you, my dear child, to tell you that except my hands, which I do not expect to be well till the weather is warm, you have

no reason to say you could not know me. My face is not altered, my mind and temper are the same as ever : I am a little thinner indeed, but that I am not sorry for. I walk out and take the air, without any uneasiness : and the only reason of their sitting up with me is because I cannot conveniently turn myself yet in my bed ; but I sleep like a top. I must own this is a little uncomfortable, and that I find it so, but, my dear, we must suffer whatever it pleases God to inflict on us, and I may think myself very happy in being so well as I am, for you know what sort of thing a rheumatism is to deal with. As to your question, I will answer you in the words of Medea :

C'est ainsi qu'en partant je vous fais mes adieux.[1]

This I have done, and am told that I shall resume my beautiful health. I wish it may be so for your sake, my dear, and the love you bear me : besides, I should not be very unwilling myself to give you this pleasure. The good Princess has paid me a visit to-day ; she inquired if I had heard from you ; I wished for your answer to have given her. The indolence of a country life makes one attentive to these little things. I could not help blushing when this came into my head, and she reddened a little too. I should have been glad you had discharged that debt a little sooner on my account. She sets off on Wednesday, owing to the death of M. de Valois, and I shall set out on Tuesday, that I may sleep at Laval. I shall not write to you on Wednesday, so do not be uneasy at not hearing from me. But I shall write from Malicorne, where I intend to stay two days to rest myself. I begin already to feel the want of my little secretary.

You imagine that we have bad weather here ; we have Provence weather here, but what surprises me is that you have Brittany weather with you : I supposed yours a thousand times finer, and you supposed ours a thousand worse than it really is. I have made the most of the season, imagining we may have a return of winter in April or May, which I am accordingly going to pass in Paris. And now, had you but seen me play the sick and delicate lady in my bed-gown, my arm-

[1] It is thus in parting I bid you adieu.

chair, my pillows, and my night-cap, believe me, you would not have known me again for the person who used to dress so light and airily, without cap, cloak, or bonnet, and who never sat upon anything but a folding chair ; but this rheumatism has wrought a total change. I forgot to tell you that our uncle de Sévigné is dead. Madame de la Fayette now inherits her mother's fortune. M. du Plessis Guinégaut is dead also. You know what is necessary to be done with respect to his wife.

Corbinelli tells me I lose all my wit and spirit when I dictate, so that he will correspond with me no longer. I believe he is right : I find my style flat, be you more generous, my dear, and continue to charm me with your entertaining letters. I entreat you to calculate the moons during your pregnancy ; if you lie in a single day after the ninth moon, your infant will live : if not, do not expect a miracle. I shall set out on Tuesday ; the roads are as good as in summer, but we have a sharp north-east wind that cuts my poor hands to pieces. I must have hot weather for them, steam is nothing. I am very well otherwise, and it is droll enough to see a woman that looks well in the face fed like an infant ; but we become used to these inconveniences.

Adieu, my dearest : continue to love me, and receive in return the tenderest attachment that ever united parent to child. I felt our separation during my illness, and often thought that it would have been a great comfort to have had you with me. I have given orders that your letters may find me at Malicorne. I embrace the Count, or rather, I desire him to embrace me. I am wholly yours, and so is the good Abbé, who is reckoning and calculating from morning till night, and is not a penny the richer for it, so completely has this province been fleeced.

LETTER XCIII

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, April 8, 1676.

I am dull and mortified, my dear child, at not being able to write all I wish. I begin to be impatient at this tedious delay. I am extremely well in health, the change of air has been of great service to me, but my hands cannot be persuaded to share in the recovery. I have seen all our friends, male and female. I keep my room, and observe your advice in making the care of my health my principal concern. The Chevalier (de Grignan) comes and chats with me till eleven o'clock: he is very obliging. I got so far the better of his modesty as to prevail on him to give me an account of his campaign: when we both shed tears to the memory of M. de Turenne. What think you of Marshal de Lorges? Is he not fortunate? Honours, riches, and a pretty wife! She was educated as one destined to be in time a great lady. Fortune is a pretty goddess; but I cannot forgive her incivilities to ourselves.

From M. de Corbinelli

I am just come in time, Madam, to relieve this poor weak hand; but I shall resign the pen whenever it pleases. It was going to inform you of a droll speech of M. d'Armagnac's. There was a dispute concerning the places of the Princes and Dukes at the Communion, which was thus regulated by his Majesty: immediately after the Princes of the blood followed M. de Vermondois and the ladies; the attendance of the rest of the Dukes and Princes of Lorraine being dispensed with. Upon this M. d'Armagnac took upon him to expostulate with His Majesty on the arrangement, but the King giving him to understand that he would have it so, "Sire," replies M. d'Armagnac, "le charbonier est le maître chez lui." [1] This was considered excellent by every one; we also think it so, and I am sure you will.

[1] The coal-heaver is master in his own house.

From Madame de Sévigné

I do not like to employ secretaries that have more wit than myself. I am afraid to make them write all my nonsense. The little girl was excellent on this account. I still intend to go to Bourbon ; and cannot but wonder that anyone should endeavour to dissuade me from it, since it is the advice of all the physicians.

I mentioned to d'Hacqueville yesterday that you had said you would come and pay me a visit there. I need not tell you how much I wish it, nor how much I regret passing my life thus without you. It seems as if we had another in store, for which we reserve the pleasure of seeing each other continually, and enjoying our mutual affection ; but we are wasting the present, which is our all, and death closes the account : this is an affecting thought. But notwithstanding the desire I have for your company, if you imagine the expense of the journey will be a means of preventing your coming here next winter, I would not have you think of it ; I had rather not see you till then, for I have no hopes of going to Grignan. The good Abbé will not go ; he has a great deal of business here, and besides that is apprehensive of the climate. I find in referring to my treatise of ingratitude, that it will not be right to leave him at his age ; and as I know a separation from me would be like that of soul and body, I should always reproach myself if he were to die in my absence. Consider, therefore, whether for the pleasure of being together for three weeks we should sacrifice that of spending the whole winter together ; settle this in your mind, according to the plan and situation of your affairs ; remembering at the same time that my affection, and the miserable state I have been in, call upon you to give me all the comfort in your power, and the greatest of all comforts is that of seeing you. If you could come back with me here from Bourbon, it would be excellent ; we would pass our autumn at Livri ; and in the winter M. de Grignan might come and see us, and take you away with him in the spring. This would be the easiest way, the most natural, and the most desirable for me. Think seriously of all this, there is no time to lose : I shall set out for Bourbon, or Vichy, next month.

You wish me to inform you particularly of my health ; except some flying pains which I feel occasionally in my hands and knees, I am quite well. I sleep well, and eat well in moderation. I have no one to sit up with me, and I begin to feed myself with my left hand : it was the most ridiculous thing in the world to see me fed ; and with regard to writing, you see my performance. I am told wonders in praise of Vichy, and I think I shall prefer it to Bourbon for two reasons ; first, because Madame de Montespan, they say, is going to Bourbon, and secondly, because Vichy is nearer to you ; so that if you should come to me, you will have a less fatiguing journey, and if the *worthy* should change his mind we shall be nearer to Grignan. In short, my dear child, I cherish the sweet hope of seeing you ; you must arrange everthing, but pray let me see you for longer than a fortnight : it would not be worth while to take so much trouble and have so much regret at parting with you again for so short a period. You laugh at Villebrune, but I have been advised here to do exactly as he advised me. I am going to foment my hands ; and if you knew the agitation caused by the equinox, you would retract your errors. The *frater* will soon join his brigade, and from thence will go to *matins*. I have kept my room for six days, that I may recover from the fatigue of my journey. I receive everybody : the Soubises, the Sullys, have come to see me for your sake. I hear no mention of sending M. de Vendôme to Provence. Your residence there deserves that some dignity should be conferred on you ; all your reasons are admirable ; but it is not I who do not wish to go to Grignan.

The Chevalier de Mirabeau has told us how much you were affected with the news of my illness, and that six hours' grief had altered you so as scarcely to be known. You may judge, my dear, how sensibly I felt these unfeigned proofs of your affection. I have seen the Duchess de Sault ; she is extremely handsome, and as gay as a lark, which shows that she has passed all her life at church with her mother : her spirits are inconceivable. She is going into Dauphiné. Her husband seems melancholy ; but that is attributed to his having left the service. It is said, and he begins to think so himself, that he

ought not to have cared about being appointed Lieutenant-General a year sooner or later. I only touch upon these subjects, and suppress half my thoughts on account of my poor hand. The Princess de Tarente is expected here in a day or two. Madame has written to her very affectionately, calling her good aunt. About a week ago, M. de Vendôme said to the King that he hoped after the campaign was ended His Majesty would permit him to go and take possession of the Government he had done him the honour to give him. "Sir," replied the King, "when you know how to manage your own affairs, I will give you the charge of mine"; and there it ended.

Adieu, my dearest child. I take up the pen, and lay it down ten times in writing a letter; do not fear therefore that I shall hurt my hand.

LETTER XCIV

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, April 15, 1676.

I am very melancholy, my dear, my poor boy is just gone; he has so many little social virtues that are the charm of society that were he only an acquaintance I should regret his loss. He desired me over and over again to tell you that he forgot to take notice to you of the story of your Proteus, who was at one time a Capuchin, at another time a galley-slave; he was highly amused at it. It is supposed we are going to undertake the siege of Cambrai; this is so extraordinary a step, that every one thinks we have had intelligence with someone in the place. If we lose Philippsburg it will be very difficult to repair the breach: *vederemo*, we shall see. But still we reason and make almanacs, all of which end with *the King's star will prevail.*

At length Marshal Bellefond has cut the thread that tied him here. Sanguin has purchased his place [1] for 55,000 livres,

[1] Of Premier Maître d'Hôtel, or Lord Chamberlain, to the King.

and a *brevet de retenue* of 350,000. This is a fine settlement, and an assurance of a cordon bleu.[1] M. de Pomponne has paid me a very cordial visit : all your friends have exerted themselves wonderfully. I do not go out yet. The cold winds retard the cure of my hands, and yet I write better than I did, as you may see. I turn myself at night on my left side ; I eat with my left hand : these are left-handed performances. My face is very little altered ; you would soon discover that you have seen it somewhere before ; it is because I have not been bled, and have endeavoured to get cured of my illness without such remedies. I thank you for mentioning the pigeons to me. Where has the little one acquired this timidity ? I am afraid you will throw the blame upon me : you cast a suspicious eye towards me. This humour will, I dare say, pass off, and you will not be obliged to make a monk of him. I am resolved to go to Vichy ; they have set me against Bourbon on account of the air. The Maréchale d'Estrées wishes me to go to Vichy ; she says it is a delightful country. I have told you what I think of that affair ; either resolve to return hither with me, or do not come at all ; for a fortnight will only disturb me with constant thoughts of a separation, and will be on the whole a foolish and useless expense. You know how dear the sight of you is to me ; so take your own measures.

I wish you had finished the bargain about your estate. M. de Pomponne tells me it is raised to a marquisate. I desired him to make it a dukedom ; he assured me it would give him great pleasure to do so, and that he would use all expedition in drawing up the patents. This is a considerable step. I am delighted to hear the pigeons are so well. How does the little tiny or rather the great fat one do ? I love him dearly, for resolving to live against wind and tide. But I cannot forget my little girl[2] ; I suppose you will determine on putting her to Sainte Marie, according to the resolutions you adopted this summer : all depends upon that. You seem satisfied with the

[1] M. de Sanguin was not created a Knight of the King's Order at the promotion in 1688, but the Marquis de Livri, his son, who was Premier Maître d'Hôtel, was comprehended in that of 1724.

[2] Marie-Blanche d'Adhémar, born the 15th November, 1670.

devotions of Passion and Easter weeks : you shut yourself up at Grignan. For my part, my thoughts were not affected with anything ; I had no object to strike the sense : I ate meat till Good Friday, and had only the comfort of being very distant from any opportunity of committing sin. I told La Mousse you remembered him ; and he advises you to make the most of your man of wit. Adieu, my dear child.

From M. de Corbinelli

I always come in at a fortunate time to relieve this poor hand, which was just going to tell you that the good Princess de Tarente has been here, and that she is so full of business and so stunned with the noise of Paris that I could not say anything to her about your answer. We mutually regret the tranquillity of the Rocks. But I am weary of acting the secretary, and so I will talk to you a little myself.

Your good mother mentioned the project of Cambrai to you, but very slightly. This is what the politicians say of the affair. It is certain that our troops are all distributed to different parts ; some are before Cambrai, others before Ypres, and others are sent towards Brussels, whither Vandrai has been dispatched. The design of this is to amuse the Allies, and to prevent them from forming a strong army by the junction of their several garrisons. But what is considered the worst, is sending a Secretary of State [1] to assemble the troops and carry orders himself to all parts. M. de Créqui is at Cambrai ; M. de Humières at Ypres, but as to the rest, their destination is still known only to the King. The day of his departure was kept secret till Monday on leaving the council room. The Duke of Luxembourg has declared against us, and furnished the Imperialists with five or six thousand men : the Princes, his brothers, are of little consequence, that is the Duke of Hanover,[2] and the Bishop of Osnabruck. We have demanded the Infanta of Bavaria [3] for the Dauphin ; but since her mother's [4] death the King of Spain has demanded

[1] M. de Louvois.
[2] His late Majesty George I.
[3] Marie-Anne-Victoria of Bavaria, married in 1680 to Louis, Dauphin of France.
[4] Henriette Adelaide of Savoy, who died the 18th of March, 1676.

her likewise, and it is believed that he will obtain her, for the good elector wishes to espouse the King of Poland's widow,[1] who is sister to the Emperor (Leopold). If M. de Marseilles could have parried this stroke, I should have said something to him.

The King has ordered the Parliament to make out a commission for a Counsellor of the High Chamber to repair to Rocroi and examine Madame de Brinvilliers, for they will not have her brought hither to be examined, because most of the gentlemen of the robe are related in some way or other to that unhappy woman.

LETTER XCV

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, April 29, 1676.

I must begin by telling you that Condé was taken by storm on Saturday night. The news at first made my heart beat; I feared the victory had cost us dear, but it does not prove so; we have lost some men, but none of any note; this may be reckoned a complete happiness. Larei, the son of M. Lainé, who was killed in Candia, or his brother, is dangerously wounded. You see how soon our old heroes are forgotten.

Madame de Brinvilliers is not so comfortable as I am; she is in prison, and endeavours to pass her time there as pleasantly as she can; she desired yesterday to play at piquet, because she was dull. Her confession has been found; it informs us that at the age of seven years she ceased to be a virgin; that she had ever since gone on at the same rate; that she had poisoned her father, her brothers, one of her children, and herself; but the last was only to make trial of a counter-poison. Medea was a saint compared with her. She has owned this confession to be her own writing; it was an

[1] Cleonora-Maria of Austria, widow to Michael Viesnoviski.

unaccountable folly ; but she says she was in a high fever, when she wrote it, and that it was an act of madness or frenzy, which does not deserve a serious thought.

The Queen has been twice at the Carmelites with Madame de Montespan. The latter set on foot a lottery ; she collected everything that could be useful to the nuns ; this was a great novelty and amusement in the convent. She conversed a long time with Sister Louise de la Misericorde,[1] and asked her whether it was really true that she was as happy there as it had been generally reported. She replied, " I am not happy, but I am contented." *Quanto* talked to her a great deal of the brother of Monsieur, and asked her if she had no message to send him, and what she should say to him for her. She replied in the sweetest tone and manner possible, though perhaps a little piqued at the question, " Whatever you please, Madam, whatever you please." Fancy this to be expressed with all the grace, spirit, and modesty which you so well understand. *Quanto* afterwards wished for something to eat, and sent to purchase some ingredient that was necessary for a sauce she prepared herself, and which she ate with a wonderful appetite. I tell you the simple fact without the least embellishment. When I think of the letter you wrote me last year about M. de Vivonne, I consider all I send you as a burlesque. To what lengths will not folly lead a man who thinks himself deserving of such exaggerated praise !

You congratulate me upon the hopes I have of finding Madame de Brissac at Vichy, and you ask me what entertainment I can promise myself from her. I have made choice of her, my dear, to teach me simplicity and sincerity in conversation. If I had had my son with me the other day, whom I might have employed as my secretary, I would have sent you a sketch of the superficial conversation she entertained us with in this room.

You say, my dear, you have taken in idea the remedies prescribed to you ; you are very fortunate. I wish I could be bled in idea, for they say it is a necessary preparatory to my drinking the waters.

[1] Madame de la Vallière.

To M. de Grignan

I assure you, my dear Count, I should be a thousand times more pleased with the favour you mention than with one conferred by his Majesty. You comprehend the extreme desire I have to see your wife. Without being a coal-heaver, you are more master in your own house than all the coal-heavers in the world, and no man is superior to you in any respect whatever. But be generous ; and when she has acted the part of a good wife a little longer, lead her to me by your own hand, and bid her act that of a good daughter. It is thus a man of honour acquits himself of his duties ; and this is the only way to restore me to health and to life.

To Madame de Grignan

How strange it is that you are still talking of Cambrai ! We shall have taken another town before you will have heard of the taking of Condé. What think you of the favour fortune has done us in bringing our friend the Turk into Hungary ? Corbinelli is much pleased with it. I shall have a warm dispute with him upon the subject. I admire the coadjutor's devotion ; if he has any to spare, he may send it to the handsome Abbé. I feel the departure of my granddaughter : is she sorry at being placed in a convent ?

I know not whether Vardes will wish to dispose of his post in imitation of the Marshal (de Bellefond). I pity him sincerely; you interpret his sentiments amiss : it is in vain for him to speak honestly, you will not believe a word he says : you are wicked. He has just written me a very affectionate letter, which I take in the literal sense, because I am good. Here comes M. de Coulanges, who will tell you in what way Madame de Brinvilliers has attempted to destroy herself.

Continued by M. de Coulanges

She thrust a stick, not into her eye, nor into her ear, nor into her mouth ; I leave you to guess where ; but she would certainly have died if timely assistance had not been rendered her. I am delighted, Madame, that you were pleased with the

poems. I expect M. de Bandol's return with impatience, to know what reception you gave the poem entitled *Tobit*. He must certainly have had the address to impart it to you without offence to the purity of a soul which you have so newly washed in the salutary streams of the Jubilate. Your mother is going to Vichy : I shall not accompany her, because my health has been better for some time. Neither do I think I shall go to Lyons : so that you must bring your beautiful face to Paris, if you expect a kiss from me. I salute M. de Grignan, and inform him I have contrived, should M. de Lussan gain his suit, that he may thank me for it, if he thinks proper.

LETTER XCVI

To the Same

Paris, Friday, May 1, 1676.

I begin by thanking M. de Grignan a thousand times for the pretty gown he has sent me. I never saw a prettier one in my life ; I am going to have it made up for the winter, to treat you with it. I often think as well as you of the evenings we passed together last winter : but pray what should prevent us from passing this winter in the same way, if you are not against it ? Every one here is struck with amazement at your picture ; it is certainly much improved, the colours are grown stronger, and it is now a finished piece : if you suspect my veracity, come and see it yourself. A report has been in circulation these two or three days, of which every one comes to me to know the truth. It is said that M. de Grignan has orders to turn the Vice-Legate neck and shoulders out of Avignon : I shall not believe a syllable of it till I hear it from you. The Grignans will have the honour of being excommunicated the first, if this noble war should begin ; for the Abbé Grignan has had orders from His Majesty to forbid the Bishops from visiting the Nuncio.

I am in no hurry about setting out, for I know that June is a better month than May for drinking the waters, and so I shall begin my journey about the eleventh of next month. Madame de Montespan is on her way to Bourbon : Madame de Thianges accompanies her as far as Nevers, where she is to be met by the Duke and Duchess of that place. My son informs me they are going to besiege Bouchain with part of the army, while the King, with the main body, is to wait for the Prince of Orange, and give him battle. The Chevalier d'Humières has been out of the Bastille this week ; this he owes to his brother. Nothing is talked of here at present but the strange conversation and conduct of Madame de Brinvilliers : could one have thought she would have been afraid of forgetting the murder of her father at confession ? The peccadilloes, too, that she was afraid of forgetting were admirable. She was in love, it seems, with this Sainte Croix, and wished to marry him, and for that purpose gave her husband poison several times. Sainte Croix, who did not wish to have a wife as wicked as himself, gave the poor husband a dose of counter-poison ; so that, after being bandied about five or six times sometimes poisoned, sometimes counter-poisoned, he is at last actually making intercession for his dear wife. Oh, there is no end of some peoples' follies.

I went to Vincennes yesterday with the Villars's : His Excellency sets out to-morrow for Savoy, and desired me to kiss your left hand for him. These ladies [1] love you very much : pray mention them when you write to me, by way of regard for their kindness. Adieu, my dear and amiable child, I shall say no more to-day.

[1] Mesdames de Villars and St. Géran.

LETTER XCVII

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, May 6, 1676.

My heart is almoſt broken about my poor granddaughter,[1] she will be inconsolable at being separated from you and confined as you say in prison. I am aſtonished how I had the courage to place you there, but the thoughts of seeing you frequently and of taking you from thence when I chose made me determine upon this barbarity, which was then thought a prudent ſtep, as being requisite to your education. In short, we muſt follow the deſtinations of Providence, which disposes of us all as it pleases. Madame de Gué, the nun, is going to Chelles. She carries a very handsome allowance with her, that she may want for nothing ; but I fancy she will change her ſtation again unless a young man,[2] who is the physician of the cloiſter, prevails on her to fix her residence there ; I saw him yeſterday at Livri. My dear child, he is eight and twenty, with the fineſt countenance I ever saw, eyes like Madame de Mazarin's, teeth like ivory, and the reſt of his person like—like—Rinaldo ; fine flowing black locks adorn the prettieſt head you would wish to see ; he is an Italian, and speaks Italian, as you may suppose. He remained at Rome till the age of twenty-two, and M. de Nevers and the Duchess at length brought him over to France, and M. de Brissac has eſtablished him in the charming Abbey of Chelles, of which Madame de Brissac, his siſter, is Abbess. He has a garden of medicinal herbs in the convent, but truſt me, he has very little of a *Lamporechio*[3] in him. I fancy moſt of the young nuns will like him, and consult him in all their disorders, but I would take the Sacrament that he will not cure one of them in any

[1] She had been recently placed in the convent of the nuns of St. Marie of Aix. See Letter of the 15th of April.

[2] Amonio.

[3] See La Fontaine's *Tale of Mazet de Lamporechio.*

other way than by the strict rules of Hippocrates. Madame de Coulanges, who is just come from Chelles, thinks of him as I do. In short, all the handsome musicians of Toulongeon's [1] are mere frights to him. You cannot imagine how this little adventure has delighted us.

A word about the little Marquis (de Grignan); I beseech you not to be under any apprehension about his timidity. Remember that the charming Marquis (de la Châtre) used to tremble and quake till he was twelve years old, and that La Troche, when young, was so terrified at the least thing that his mother could not bear to have him in her sight; and yet you see how much they have distinguished themselves since: let that comfort you. Fears of this kind are the mere effect of childhood, and when childhood is surmounted, instead of being afraid of raw-head and bloody bones these personages are afraid only of being thought fearful, are afraid of being less esteemed than others, and that is sufficient to make them brave, and kill their thousands and tens of thousands: let me then again beg you to make yourself easy on that score. As to his shape: it is another matter; I would advise you to put him into breeches, and then you will see better how his legs go on, and whether they straighten as he grows. You must let him have room to stir himself, and unfold his little limbs: but you must put him in a pretty tight vest which will confine his shape. I shall receive some farther instructions, however, on this subject, which I will not fail to transmit to you. It would be a fine thing indeed to see a Grignan with a bad shape! Do you not remember how pretty he was in his swaddling-clothes? I am no less uneasy than yourself at this alteration.

I must have been dreaming when I told you Madame de Thianges accompanied her sister part of the way; there was only Madame la Maréchale de Rochefort, and the Marchioness de la Vallière, and they saw her as far as Essonne. She is now quite alone, and what is more, will meet with nobody at Nevers. If she had had a mind to have taken all the ladies at the Court with her, she had nothing to do but to speak. But another word respecting the *friend* (Madame de Maintenon); she

[1] Elder brother to the Count de Grammont, and a remarkably pleasant man.

is still more triumphant than the lady we have been speaking of; everything is subject to her will; all the attendants of her neighbour (the Queen) are devoted to her; one presents her with her box of paste, kneeling; another brings her gloves; a third lulls her to sleep; she salutes no one, and, I believe, in her heart laughs very heartily at the parade. It is impossible at present to judge how matters stand between her and her female friend.

The town is full of nothing but La Brinvilliers. Caumartin made a very foolish speech about the stick with which she endeavoured, ineffectually, to kill herself. "It was like Mithridates," he said. Now you know he was proof against poison, and I need not lead you farther into the application. Your application to my hand of "Go, go, the complaint is vain," [1] made me laugh heartily, for the dialogue is complete and my hand answers, "Ah, barbarian, what cruelty!"—"Go," I reply, "finish my writings, I will avenge myself for all I have suffered."—"What!" says my hand, "will you be inexorable?" And I finish by saying, "It is you, cruel wretch, who have taught me to be so." What humour you possess, my dear child, and how you would make me laugh, if I could visit you this summer at Grignan! But I must not think of it, for the *worthy* is overwhelmed with business: I reserve this pleasure for another year, and I hope you will come to see me before this year is passed.

I have been at the opera with Madame de Coulanges, Madame d'Heudicourt, M. de Coulanges, the Abbé de Grignan and Corbinelli. Oh! there are some admirable things in this opera (*Atys*). The scenery is beyond all description, the dresses are superb, and there are some very beautiful parts in it; there is a scene of sleep and dreams, the invention of which is surprising. The symphony consists entirely of bass, and the sounds are so lulling, that we admire Baptiste more than ever. But Atys is played by the same person who played the Fury and the Nurse; so that we always think we see the same droll characters in *Atys*. There are five or six new dancers that are equal to Faure, and they are a sufficient attraction to me;

[1] See Act II, Scene II, of the Opera of *Alceste*.

but, upon the whole, the town seems to like *Alceſte* better ; you shall judge for yourself, for you will certainly come for my sake, notwithſtanding your want of curiosity. To be sure, it is a ſtrange thing not to have seen Trianon ; how can I, after that, propose to you to visit the Pont du Gard ?

You will find the gentleman whose adventure you have so easily divined exactly the same as you have always seen him at the lady's : but it appears to me as if the combat ceased for want of champions.[1] The reproaches were founded upon pride, rather than jealousy : but when dryness is added to what was before dry, it confirms an indifference inseparable from long attachments. I sometimes hear short and harsh replies, and I think they begin to feel the want of similarity of taſtes and dispositions ; but, notwithſtanding all this, there is a considerable intimacy, and even friendship, which may laſt twenty years longer. The lady is really very pretty ; I receive great attentions from her, and am not ungrateful. Women are worth their weight in gold.

The Countess de Fiesque was insiſting the other day to Madame de Cornuel that Combourg was no fool ; upon which Madame de Cornuel said to her, " My good Countess, you are like people who have eaten garlic." Was not that excellent ? M. de Pomponne has written to desire me not to forget to write down all Madame de Cornuel's witticisms.

We shall set out on Monday ; I shall not go through Fontainebleau, on account of the grief I suffered at parting from you there, and I have no desire to go there again except to meet you. I fear our correspondence will be a little interrupted now ; this vexes me, for your letters are my greateſt amuſement, and you write as Faure dances. How I pity you, my dear, for being obliged to take filthy medicine blacker than ever ! My little powder of antimony is the prettieſt thing in the world ; it is the ſtaff of life, as old de Lorme says ; but, by the bye, I muſt tell you that I disobey good M. de Lorme a little, for he wishes me to go to Bourbon, but the experience of a thousand people, the fine air and less company determine

[1] This refers to the intimacy between Madame de Coulanges and the Marquis de la Trousse.

me to go to Vichy. The good Escars goes with me, to my great joy. My fingers will not close yet, and I have a pain in my knees and shoulders ; in short, I am so full of serosities, as they are called, that I must absolutely have these marshes drained, which can only be done by drinking warm chalybeate waters, and then I think I shall do pretty well.

The journey to Aigues-Mortes must have been very pleasant, and you were a lazy creature not to be of the party. I have a very good opinion of your conversations with the Abbé de la Vergne, so long as you keep clear of the Bishop of Marseilles. Madame de Brissac's devotion was a fine farce ; I will tell you more about her from Vichy : the Canoness [1] has the direction of her conscience at present, and she, I am persuaded, will tell me everything. I have been bled this morning ; this is really a serious affair ! But I am now quite ready to set out.

LETTER XCVIII

To the Same

Nevers, Friday, May 15, 1676.

I am at a place which would tempt me to write to you whether I would or no ; you may judge then how it is, knowing my disposition. The weather is delightful ; this violent heat has passed off without a storm, I have no more of those crises I told you of ; the country is very fine, and I find our River Loire as beautiful here as at Orleans : it is a great pleasure to meet with an old acquaintance upon the road. I have brought my large coach with me, so that we are quite at our ease, and enjoy the fine prospects which rise before us every instant ; all that vexes me is that the roads will be bad in the winter, which will fatigue you in your journey.

We follow close upon the heels of Madame de Montespan, and hear at every place how she looked, how she ate, how she

[1] Madame de Longueval, canoness of the Abbey St. Marie of Aix. She was sister to the Maréchale d'Estrées, and M. de Manicamp.

drank, and how she slept. She is in a calash with eight horses, and has the little Thianges with her ; another coach follows with the same number of horses, with six of her women in it ; she has two sumpters, six mules, and ten or twelve men on horseback, without reckoning her officers ; her whole train consists of about five and forty persons. She always finds her chamber and bed ready ; she goes to bed immediately on her arrival, and eats heartily. She was here at the castle where M. de Nevers came to give orders for her reception, but he did not stay to receive her. She gives away a great deal in charity, and with a very good grace. She receives a courier from the army every day ; she is now at Bourbon. The Princess of Tarente, who knows all the rest, will inform me, and I shall take care to communicate it to you. Have I told you that that same favourite of the King of Denmark, who was so romantically enamoured of the Princess, her daughter, is in prison, and is to be tried ? He had formed a little design, it seems, of dethroning his master and benefactor, and of making himself King. You will find this man had no mean way of thinking. M. de Pomponne spoke of him to me the other day as of a second Cromwell. Let me tell you, my dear child, that I find I shall not be able to live long without paying another visit to your castle, with all its circumstances and dependences ; I cherish this pleasing hope, and wish the prospect was a little less distant. Adieu, my dear : I shall certainly write to you from Moulins, where I hope to find the letters you must by this time have sent to Paris. I am in utter ignorance of all kind of news. I have the war very much at heart, which is but a bad companion for the waters ; but what is to be done when we have a friend in the army ? At that rate, I should not be able to take them till January. I read, while I am in the coach, a little history of the Vizirs, and the intrigues of the Seraglio, which is amusing enough : it is a book that is quite in fashion.

Good-night, my lovely, I salute Grignan, and send a thousand good wishes to La Garde ; tell the latter by what ill-luck the wind has blown our *guidonage* down the stream : you are fortunate in having them both with you.

LETTER XCIX

To the Same

From Moulins at the convent of the Visitation, in the room in which my grandmother [1] *died. Sunday, May* 17, 1676, *after vespers, with two little girls from Valencia at my side*

I arrived here, my dear, last evening, after a pleasant journey of six days. Madame Fouquet, with her brother-in-law and his son, came to meet me, and took me to their house to sleep. I dined here to-day, and to-morrow I set out for Vichy. I think the mausoleum very beautiful.[2] The good Abbé would have been delighted with it. The little girls are very amiable and pretty ; you have seen them, and they remember hearing you sigh very deeply in this church ; I believe I had some part in your sorrow ; at least, I am sure I sighed very mournfully myself much about the same time. Is it true that Madame de Guénégaud said to you "Sigh, Madam, sigh ; I have accustomed Moulins to the sighs that are brought from Paris ? " I admire you greatly for having thought of a match for your brother ; you have hit the right nail on the head, and I have a great esteem for the negotiator. I shall follow this clue on my return to Paris, and you may therefore write to d'Hacqueville about it. They judge very well of my son by my daughter ; and it would be an event worthy of you to complete this marriage. I shall let no stone remain unturned on my side. And so, you think, my dear child, you were not sufficiently alarmed at my illness. What more, in the name of God, could you have done ? You were in much greater alarm than I was in danger : as my two and twenty days' fever was only occasioned by pain,

[1] Jeanne Françoise Frémiot, Baroness of Chantal, foundress of the Order of the Visitation, beatified by a brief of Pope Benedict the XIV, and canonized by Clement XIII.

[2] The superb monument which Marie Félice des Ursins erected in the church of the Visitation at Moulins, to the memory of her husband Henry Duke of Montmorency, who was beheaded at Toulouse the 30th of October, 1632, by an order of the Parliament of Toulouse.

it gave no one apprehensions for my safety. My delirium proceeded only from want of proper nourishment, for I could swallow nothing but a little broth ; besides, some people are delirious all the time of a fever. Your brother has remembered the nonsense I used to talk, and makes me ready to die with laughing at the repetition ; he will tell it you when he sees you, and you will laugh as heartily as I did. Let your mind therefore, be at rest, my dear child, for you have had but too much uneasiness already on my account.

M. de la Garde must certainly have had very substantial reasons to induce him to harness himself with another : I thought him quite free, bounding and gambolling in a meadow, and I find he has put his neck into the yoke as well as others.

Madame de Montespan is at Bourbon, where M. de la Vallière had given orders for her to be addressed by a deputation from all the towns in his Government, but she declined the compliment. She has given twelve beds to the hospital, a great deal of money on charity, and receives visitors with politeness. M. Fouquet and his niece, who were drinking the waters at Bourbon, went to pay her a visit, and she conversed for nearly an hour with him upon some very curious subjects. Madame Fouquet went the next day ; she was received with sweetness and affability, and Madame de Montespan listened to her apparently with great interest and compassion. God inspired Madame Fouquet with eloquence upon the occasion, both upon the subject of sharing her husband's confinement, and the hope that if ever an opportunity offered, Madame de Montespan would remember her misfortunes. In short, without exacting any absolute promise, she set forth the horrors of her situation, and the confidence she had in her goodness, in terms that were calculated to affect the heart, without meanness or importunity ; the bare recital affected me, and I am sure it would have affected you.

M. de Montespan's son [1] is now at Madame Fouquet's in the country. He is about ten years old, is handsome and sprightly ; his father, at his return to Paris, left him with the Fouquets. The good d'Escars is well, and is extremely kind

[1] Louis Antoine de Pardaillan, afterwards Duke d'Antin.

and careful of me. Pray relate to me the sorceries of Madame de Rus.

Adieu, my dear ; I embrace you a thousand times, and love you as I love my salvation.

LETTER C

To the Same

Vichy, Tuesday, May 19, 1676.

I begin to write to you to-day : my letter may go when it can, but I am resolved to have a little chat with you.

I arrived here last evening : Madame de Brissac with her canoness,[1] Madame de St. Hérem, and two or three others, came to receive me on the banks of the pretty River Allier : I think if search were made, some of the Arcadian family might be found on its banks. M. de St. Hérem, M. de la Fayette, the Abbé Dorat, Planci, and some others, followed in another carriage, and on horseback. I was received with great joy. Madame de Brissac took me home to sup with her ; and I think I can already see that the canoness has the good Duchess just there—you see where I put my hand. I have rested myself to-day, and to-morrow I begin to drink the waters.

M. de St. Hérem came this morning to take me to mass, and from thence to dinner with him ; Madame de Brissac was of the party, and they played at cards ; this is at present too fatiguing an amusement for me. We took a walk this evening in one of the most charming spots in the world, and at seven o'clock the poor *wet pullet* ate her chicken, and chatted a little with her dear child : the more I see of others, the more I love you. I have thought a great deal of the sketch of devotion you drew with M. de la Vergne, and have myself fancied the remainder of this fabulous conversation. What you told me of it, the other day, ought to be printed. I am pleased the *worthy* is not with us ; he would have made but an indifferent

[1] Madame de Longueval.

figure : without drinking the waters, this place is very dull ; there is a confusion here that is far from being agreeable, and less so to him than to any other person.

It is reported here that we have taken Bouchain as happily as Condé, and that, notwithstanding the feints of the Prince of Orange, he will certainly attempt nothing ; that is some comfort to me.[1] The good St. Géran has sent me her compliments from La Palisse. I have entreated them all not to mention a word to me about the short distance it is from hence to Lyons ; that is a grief to me ; and as I do not wish to put my virtue to the greatest and most dangerous trial it can sustain, I will not cherish a thought of this kind, whatever it may cost my heart to banish it.

I wait for your letter with great impatience, and when I am absent from you, my dear, writing to you is my only pleasure ; and should even the physicians, at whom, by the by, I laugh in my sleeve, forbid me this, I should in my turn forbid them to eat or drink, or breathe, to see how they would relish that regimen.

Let me hear some news about my little girl, and if she is reconciled to her convent yet ; let me know likewise, if M. de la Garde returns to Paris this winter : I must own that if by some unforeseen accident I should be deprived of the pleasure of seeing you, it would make me half mad. The word *plague* that I see in your letter makes me tremble. I should be very apprehensive of a disorder of that kind in such a climate as Provence. I pray God to avert such a scourge from a place where He has fixed you. What misery it is that we should be doomed to pass our days at such a distance from each other, when our affection draws us together so closely !

Wednesday, 20th.

Well, I have taken the waters this morning, my dear ; ah, they are horridly disagreeable ! I called on the canoness ;

[1] It was considered as a great fault that the French did not give battle. Louvois prevented it, and his enemies said he wished to prolong the war. The fact is, that the pride of Louis XIV would not allow him to hazard uncertain success. This was not the case, since the Prince of Orange himself wished to give battle, and was only restrained by the Spaniards.

she does not lodge with Madame de Brissac. The company go at six o'clock to the spring ; there we all assemble, and drink, and make wry faces ; for only picture to yourself that they are boiling hot, and have a very nauseous taste of sulphur. We walk to and fro, we chat, we go to mass, we work off the waters, and everyone speaks, without hesitation, of the effect they produce : thus the time passes till noon : we then go to dinner, and, after dinner, pay visits. This has been my day to see company. Madame de Brissac played at ombre with St. Hérem and Planci : the canoness and myself read *Ariosto* ; she is very fond of Italian, and likes me exceedingly. Two or three young ladies of the neighbourhood came with a flute, and danced a *bourrée* very prettily ; but to finish my account : at five o'clock we take a walk in a delightful country ; at seven we eat a light supper, and at ten retire to rest. So now you know as much of the matter as myself.

I find the waters agree very well with me. I drank a dozen glasses ; they purge me a little, which is all that is required of them. I shall bathe in a few days. I shall write to you every evening ; this is a consolation to me ; and my letters will go when it pleases a certain little post-boy to call for them, who brings the letters and sets out a quarter of an hour afterwards. Mine shall be always ready for him.

The Abbé Bayard is just come from his pretty house to pay me a visit. He is the *Druid Adamas* of this country.

Thursday, 21*st*.

Our little post-boy is just arrived, covered with mud, but has brought me no letters from you. I have one from Coulanges, one from honest d'Hacqueville, and one from the Princess de Tarente, who is at Bourbon. They have allowed her only to make her court for a quarter of an hour ; her affairs will go on swimmingly ; she wishes for me at Paris, but I think myself very well where I am.

The waters have done me a great deal of good to-day. I fear nothing but the bath. Madame de Brissac had the colic to-day ; she lay in bed, looked very handsome, and was dressed in a manner fit to make conquests. Oh, I wish you had

but seen how prettily she managed her pains, and her eyes, and her arms, and her cries, with her hands lying on the quilt ; and the sympathy she expected from all the bystanders. I was so taken up with this scene, and thought it so excellent, that the stupid posture I stood in did me, I believe, no little credit with her ; for it seemed as if I was petrified with sorrow for her sufferings ; and only think that this fine scene was played off purposely for the Abbé Bayard, St. Hérem, Monjeu, and Planci ! In truth, child, when I think of the simplicity of your conduct in your illness, I look upon you as a downright ignoramus ; the calmness that sits upon your sweet face ! In short, what a difference ! I cannot but smile at the comparison.

As to myself, I eat my soup with my left hand by way of novelty. I hear of the good fortune of Bouchain, and that the King is to return soon ; I suppose that His Majesty will not come alone. You asked me the other day respecting M. Courtin ; he is set out for England, and I suppose his companion has now nothing more to do than to adore his fair one, you know who, without envy and without a rival.

LETTER *CI

To the Same

Vichy, Thursday, May 28, 1676.

I have just received two letters from you ; one comes from Paris, and the other from Lyons. You are deprived of a great pleasure in never having your own letters to read : I know not where you obtain all you say, but you write with a grace and propriety that I meet with nowhere else. You judge well in believing that I write without effort, and that my hands are better : they will not yet close, and the palms and fingers are very much swelled. This makes me tremble, and gives a very ill grace to my hands and arms ; but one circumstance that consoles me a little is, that I hold my pen without difficulty. I began the operation of the pump to-day ; it is no bad rehearsal of purgatory. The patient is

naked in a little subterraneous apartment, where there is a tube of hot water, which a woman directs wherever you choose. This state of nature, in which you wear scarcely a fig-leaf of clothing, is very humiliating. I wished my two women to be with me, that I might see someone I knew. Behind a curtain a person is stationed to support your courage for half an hour ; a physician of Gannet fell to my lot, whom Madame de Noailles always takes with her, whom she likes extremely, a very genteel young man neither a quack nor a bigot, and whom she sent me from pure friendship. I shall retain him, though it should cost me my hat ; the physicians here are unbearable, and this man amuses me. He is not a low mean wretch, neither is he an Amonis ; he has wit and honesty, and he knows the world : in short, I am perfectly satisfied. He talked to me the whole time I was under execution. Think of a spout of boiling water pouring upon one or other of your poor limbs! It is at first applied to every part of the body, in order to rouse the animal spirits, and then to the joints affected ; but when it comes to the nape of the neck, the heat creates a surprise which it is impossible to describe. This, however, is the main point. It is necessary to suffer, and we do suffer ; we are not quite scalded to death, and are then put into a warm bed, where we sweat profusely, and this is the cure. My physician is still very kind to me, for instead of leaving me for two hours to the tediousness inseparable from such a situation, I make him read to me, and that amuses me. This is the life I shall lead for seven or eight days, during which I expected to drink the waters also ; but this, I am told, would be too much ; my stay, therefore, will be rather longer than I expected. It was to bid adieu to my rheumatism, by making the last lather for it, that I was sent here. I find it was necessary. It is like taking a new lease of life and health, and if I could see and embrace you once more in the tenderness and joy of my heart, you might perhaps still call me your *bellissima madre* (most beautiful mother), and I should not renounce the title of *mère-beauté* (mother-beauty), with which M. de Coulanges has honoured me. In short, my child, it depends on you to restore me to all my dignities.

I have felt the twenty-fourth [1] of this month very painfully ; and have marked it by too tender recollections : such days are not easily forgotten : but it would be still more cruel not to see me again, and to refuse me the satisfaction of being with you, merely to prevent me from having the grief of bidding you adieu. I conjure you, my child, to reason differently, and to suffer d'Hacqueville and me to manage the time of your absence, so that you may be at Grignan a sufficient time, and yet have enough to come here. What obligation shall I not owe you, if you think of making up to me next summer for what you have refused me in this ! It is true that seeing you for only a fortnight appeared to me an afflicting circumstance for us both ; and I thought it wiser to let you keep all your strength for this winter, since it is certain that the extra expenses of Provence being now at an end, you would not incur greater at Paris : but I have in no way relinquished the hope of seeing you, for I own that I feel it necessary for the preservation of my health and my life. You say nothing of the *pigeon* : is he still timid ? Did you not understand what I told you upon that subject ? My son was not at Bouchain ; he was a spectator of the two armies ranged so long in order of battle. This is the second time that only the trifling circumstance of fighting was wanting ; but as two quarrels are equal to a combat, I suppose that twice within musket-shot is equal to a battle. Be this as it may, the hope of seeing the poor Baron gay and cheerful, has spared me much uneasiness. It is a great happiness that the Prince of Orange was not affected with the pleasure and honour of being vanquished by such a hero as ours. You must have heard how our warriors, friends and enemies, visited *nell' uno, nell' altro campo* (in both camps), and sent presents to each other.

I am informed that Marshal de Rochefort is certainly dead at Nancy, having fallen a victim, not to the sword, but to a fever. Do you not like the idea of the little chimney-sweepers ? [2] we were tired of cupids. If the Mesdames

[1] The 24th day of May, 1675, was the day on which she parted from Madame de Grignan at Fontainebleau.

[2] She alludes to a paper fan which she sent to Madame de Grignan by the Chevalier de Buous.

de Buous are with you, pray give my compliments to them, and particularly to the mother : mothers are entitled to this distinction. Madame de Brissac is going soon ; she made sad complaints to me the other day of your coldness to her. The good d'Escars and I stay here to complete our cure. Say something for me to tell her : you cannot imagine how attentive she is to me. I have not told you how much you are celebrated here by the good Saint-Hérem, Bayard, Brissac, and Longueval. D'Hacqueville sends me word constantly of Mademoiselle de Méri's health : they would be very much alarmed if she were to have the fever, but I hope she will escape as she has so often done before. I am ordered to take chicken-broth every day ; nothing is more simple, nor more refreshing : I wish you would take some, to prevent your being burnt up at Grignan. You are very facetious upon the handsome physician of Chelles. The story of the two thrusts with a sword to weaken his man, is very well applied. I am still uneasy about the health of our Cardinal ; he exhausts himself with reading. Good heavens ! had he not read everything that was to be read ? I am delighted, my child, when you speak of your affection for me : I assure you, you cannot believe too firmly, that you constitute all the happiness, all the pleasure, and all the sorrow, of my life.

LETTER CII

To the Same

Vichy, Monday evening, June 1, 1676.

Away with you, my lady Countess ! to have the assurance to desire me not to write to you ! I would have you know, that it is one of the greatest pleasures I can enjoy. A very pretty regimen you are for prescribing me : but I desire you will leave me to indulge this inclination as I please, since I am always so ready to submit to you in every other respect. But in truth, my dear, I take my own time, and the way in

which you interest yourself with regard to my health, is the very thing that would induce me to take the greatest care of it.

Your reflections on the sacrifices we are obliged to make to reason are very just, in our present situations : it is undoubtedly true, that the love of God is the only thing that can render us happy, both in this world and the other ; this has often been said before, but you have given a turn to the expression, which has forcibly struck me. The death of Marshal de Rochefort is a noble subject for meditation. For an ambitious man, whose ambition is satisfied, to die at the age of forty, is a deplorable circumstance ! When he was dying, he entreated the Countess de Guiche to fetch his wife from Nancy, and he left her to the care of comforting her ; which I do not conceive can easily be done, considering in how many ways she is a loser.[1] I send a letter from Madame de la Fayette, which will amuse you. Madame de Brissac came hither for a certain disorder, called the colic, but not having found much relief, has left Bayard's to-day, after having dressed, danced, and squandered away, at a furious rate.

The canoness has written to me ; I fancy I thawed her ice by my coldness. I know her perfectly well, and the surest way to please her, is never to ask anything of her. Madame de Brissac and she make the prettiest contrast of fire and water that I ever beheld. I should like to see this same Duchess laying about her in your *Place des Prêcheurs*[2] without any respect to age or condition ; it exceeds everything that can be imagined. You are an oddity, child : let me tell you, she would live very well where you would starve with hunger.

But a word or two about this charming pump. I have already given you a description of it : I am now at my fourth operation, and am to continue to eight. My perspirations are so profuse, that they wet the mattresses under me ; I really think all the liquids I have drank ever since I came into the world must have remained in me till now. When I am in bed, there is really no bearing it ; my head, my whole body,

[1] Louvois undertook this office : he fell in love with her, and remained so to the end of his life.

[2] A public place in the town of Aix.

is in motion ; my spirits are all in arms, and my heart beats violently. Here I lie for a whole hour without opening my mouth, while the sweat is coming on, which lasts for two hours at a time, and to prevent my losing all patience I make my physician read to me : the man pleases me very much, I assure you, and I believe he would also please you. I have put him upon studying Descartes' philosophy and repeat to him some things I remember to have heard from you. He is a man of good education, and knows the world ; he is no quack, I can tell you, but unites the gentleman with the physician ; in a word, he is very entertaining.

I shall soon be left here alone, but that gives me no concern, provided they do not deprive me of the charming landscape, the River Allier, the thousand little woods, the brooks, the meadows, the sheep, the goats, and the peasant girls, that dance the *bourrée* upon the green. I consent to bid adieu to the rest, the country alone would cure me. The sweats which weaken everyone else, give me fresh strength, which is a sufficient proof that my disorders proceeded from a redundancy of humours. My knees are much better ; my hands, indeed, are still a little refractory, but they too will come round in time. I shall continue to drink the waters till a week after Corpus Christi day, and then I must submit to the mortifying reflection of removing to a greater distance from you. I own it would give me real satisfaction to have you here entirely to myself ; but you have inserted a clause respecting every one's returning to their own home again, that makes me shudder : but no more of this subject, my dear child, it is all over. Do all in your power to come and see me this winter. I must say that I think you ought to wish to do it, and that M. de Grignan ought likewise to wish you to give me that gratification.

I must tell you, that you do the waters of this place injustice in supposing them to be black ; no, no, they are not black ; hot, indeed, they are. Your Provence gentry would relish this beverage very indifferently ; but if you put a leaf or flower into these waters, it comes out as fresh as when first gathered ; they are so far from parching the skin, or making it rough, that

they render it smoother and softer than before : now reason upon that. Adieu, my dear child ; if it was requisite to the drinking of these waters that I should not love my daughter, I would renounce them instantly.

LETTER CIII

To the Same

Vichy, Monday, June 8, 1676.

Doubt not, my child, but that it affects me painfully to be obliged to prefer anything to you who are so dear to me ; all my consolation is, that you are not ignorant of my sentiments, and will find in my conduct an excellent subject for reflecting, as you did the other day, on the preference to be given to duty over inclination. But I conjure you and M. de Grignan likewise, to have the goodness to comfort me this winter, for a sacrifice which has cost me so dear. If this is what is called virtue and gratitude, I no longer wonder that we find so little promptitude in exercising these noble virtues. I dare not, however, dwell long on these thoughts, they interrupt the calmness of mind enjoined to those who repair hither. Let me also entreat you to consider yourself engaged to me as usual, and be assured that it is precisely what I most ardently wish for.

You are uneasy, you say, about my being pumped upon : I have borne it now for eight mornings successively ; it made me sweat profusely, which is what was wished ; and has been so far from weakening me that I find myself the stronger for it. It is certain that your presence would have been a great comfort to me, but I doubt whether I should have suffered you to have stayed amidst all this smoke and vapour : my sweating, I fancy, would have a little excited your pity ; but, upon the whole, I assure you, I am the admiration of the place, for having so courageously supported the operation. My knees are perfectly cured, and could I but close my hands,

there would be no remains of my disorder left. I shall continue to drink the waters till Saturday, which will be my sixteenth day: they purge me, and do me a great deal of good. I am vexed that you cannot see the *bourrées* of this country; it is the most surprising sight imaginable; the peasantry dance in as true time as you do, and with such an activity, a sprightliness that, in short, I am quite in raptures with them. I have a little band of music every evening, which costs me a mere trifle, and it is perfectly enchanting to see the survivors of the shepherds and shepherdesses of Lignon [1] dancing in these delightful meadows. It is impossible for me not to wish you here, with all your wisdom, a spectatress of these pleasing follies. We have the Cumaean Sybil [2] here still, so bedecked, and so gay! she thinks, poor soul, she is cured; which makes me pity her. I know not what might happen indeed, if this was the fountain of youth.

What you say as to Death taking the liberty of interrupting Fortune is admirable; this ought to comfort those who are not in the number of her favourites, and to diminish the bitterness of death. You ask me if I am religious: alas! my dear, I am not sufficiently so, for which I am very sorry; but yet I think I am somewhat detached from what is called the world. Age and sickness give us leisure enough for serious reflection; but what I retrench from the rest of the world I bestow upon you, so that I make but small advances in the path of detachment; and you know that the law of the game is to begin by effacing a little, what is dearest to our heart.

Madame de Montespan set out last Thursday from Moulins in a boat delightfully painted and gilded, and furnished with crimson damask; this magnificent little vessel had been provided for her by the intendant (M. Morant) and was ornamented with an infinite number of devices, and the colours of France and Navarre; nothing was ever more gallant; it could not have cost him less than a thousand crowns; but he was amply repaid by a letter which the fair one wrote to His

[1] A small river, but rendered famous by the romance of Astraea.
[2] Madame de Pequigny.

Majesty on the occasion, which it is said she filled with nothing but encomiums upon its magnificence. She would not be seen by the women, but the men got a sight of her under the shadow of the intendant's countenance. She is gone down the Allier to meet the Loire at Nevers, which is to have the honour of conveying her to Tours, and from thence to Fontevrauld,[1] where she waits for the King's return, who is taken up at present with his warlike occupations. I fancy this preference is not very pleasing. I shall easily comfort myself for de Ruyter's death, on account of its rendering your intended voyage more safe: is it not true, my dear Count? You desire me to love you both; alas! what else do I do? Pray be easy on that score.

I have told you what our little Coulanges says respecting the cure of the Duchess (de Brissac), which consists in retaining the waters of Vichy: this is pleasant enough. You find I knew all about *Guenani*[2] at the time you mentioned it to me.

I have just taken my waters, and they are half gone off again; this is Tuesday, at ten o'clock in the forenoon. As I am certain I cannot please you better than by laying down my pen, I conclude with embracing you tenderly.

LETTER CIV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, July 10, 1676.

Madame de Villars, who enters warmly into my joy at the prospect of seeing you, told me yesterday, that she considered the letter, in which you make me absolute mistress of regulating the time of your journey, as a bill of exchange,

[1] Fontevrauld is but one league from the River Loire.

[2] The natural daughter of Henri Juliers de Bourbon, Duc d'Anguien, and of Françoise de Montalais, relict of Jean de Beüil, Count de Marans. She was declared legitimate in June, 1692, and 5th March, 1696, she married Armand de l'Espars de Madaillan, Marquis de Lassai, whose third wife she was. The name of Guenani here is the anagram of *Anguien*.

payable at sight, and which it is in my power to receive whenever I think proper. I found the Duke de Sault with her, ready to die with laughing at the report which has spread, and still spreads, that the King is returned on account of the besieging of Maestricht, or some other place; this would be a fine step for the poor devils of courtiers, who are just come home without a farthing in their pockets: however, on Sunday next His Majesty is to declare his intentions. *Quanto's* good *friend* had determined not to come in till the other party was here ready to receive him; and if anything had happened to prevent this meeting, he was to have slept at a place thirty leagues off; but, in short, everything fell out to his heart's desire. The *friend's* household came before him, due time was allotted for the necessary ceremonies, but much more to pure and simple *friendship*, to which the whole night was dedicated.[1] Yesterday they walked out together, accompanied by some ladies, and were very glad to pay a visit to Versailles before the Court came thither, which will be in a few days, provided no earthquakes happen.

Penautier has been confronted with La Brinvilliers. It was a very melancholy interview; they were accustomed to meet upon more agreeable terms. She has so repeatedly declared, that if she dies, she will make many others die with her, that there is little doubt that she will draw this poor wretch in to share her fate; or, at least, to be put to the question, which is a dreadful thing. This man has numerous friends, and those of great consequence, whom he formerly obliged, while he was in possession of his two places.[2] They leave no stone unturned to serve him, and money flies in all directions upon the occasion; but if he is convicted, nothing can possibly save him.

I shall now lay down my pen, and take a stroll into the city, to see if I can pick up anything to amuse you. My hands are much as usual; if I found them more uncomfortable, I would immediately apply the remedies that have been proposed

[1] This alludes to Louis XIV, and his mistress Madame de Montespan.

[2] Of Treasurer-General of the States of Languedoc and Receiver-General of the Clergy of France.

to me ; but I find myself so well stocked with patience to bear them, that I shall wait till I see you, when your company will cure me of the disgust I have to medicine.

I am just returned from the city. I have been at Madame de Louvois's, Madame de Villars, and the Maréchale d'Estrées. I have seen the Grand Master,[1] who talks of setting out on Monday next whether the King does or not ; for if Maestricht should be besieged (as every one believes it will), he says he would not, upon any account, miss the opportunity of distinguishing himself on the occasion. He is a mere boy on this subject ; and, instead of declining the service, as His Majesty supposed he would have done, upon having others put over his head, he seems resolved to deserve preferment by his service, as if he was no more than a mere cadet.

But this is not what I meant to say to you, the subject has carried me farther than I intended ; I have to tell you, that the King intends to set off again ; he has been shut up a long time with M. de Louvois. The Prince waits with impatience for the result of this conference. The courtiers are all at their wit's end, not knowing where to find either money or credit ; most of them have sold their horses ; everything is in motion ; the citizens are for having the Prince sent, to save His Majesty the fatigue of another journey. The detachment that was sent to Marshal de Créqui's army returns back to Flanders. In short, I cannot say, nor can anyone else, where this bustle will end.

The *friend* of *Quanto* arrived about an hour before *Quanto*, and, while he was talking to those about him, word was brought him of her arrival : he ran to meet her with great precipitation, and remained with her for a considerable time. Yesterday he walked, as I have already told you, but in *trio* with *Quanto* and her female *friend* ; no other person was admitted, and the *sister*[2] was quite afflicted at it : this is all I know. The *male friend's* wife has wept bitterly. It is whispered, that if her husband goes, she is to accompany him in his journey ; but all this will be cleared up in a short time.

[1] The Duke de Lude.
[2] The Marchioness de Thianges.

Adieu, my dearest and best beloved; I embrace you affectionately. La St. Géran has a fever, at which she is as much surprised, as I was, at *the Rocks*. She has never been ill, any more than I had been at that time.

LETTER CV

To the Same

Paris, Friday, July 17, 1676.

At length, it is all over; La Brinvilliers is in the air; after her execution her poor little body was thrown into a large fire, and her ashes dispersed by the wind, so that whenever we breathe, we shall inhale some particles of her, and by the communication of the minute spirits, we may be all infected with the desire of poisoning, to our no small surprise. She was condemned yesterday; and this morning her sentence was read to her, which was to perform the *amende honorable* in the church of Notre-Dame; and, after that, to have her head cut off, her body burnt, and her ashes thrown into the air. They were for giving her the question, but she told them there was no occasion for that, and that she would confess everything; accordingly, she was till five o'clock in the evening relating the history of her life, which has been more shocking than was even imagined. She gave poison to her father ten times successively, but without effect, and also to her brother, and several others, at the same time preserving the appearance of the greatest love and confidence, she has said nothing against Penautier. Notwithstanding this confession, they gave her the question, ordinary and extraordinary, the next morning; but this extorted nothing more from her. She desired to speak with the Procurator-General: no one yet knows the subject of their conversation. At six o'clock she was carried in a cart, with no other covering than her shift, and with a cord round her neck, to the church of Notre-Dame, to perform the *amende honorable*; after which, she was put again into the

same cart, where I saw her extended on a truss of ſtraw, with a confeſſor on one ſide, and the hangman on the other : indeed, my child, the ſight made me ſhudder. Thoſe who ſaw the execution ſay ſhe mounted the ſcaffold with great courage. I was on the bridge of Notre-Dame with the good d'Escars ; never was Paris in ſuch commotion, nor its attention ſo fixed upon one event. Yet, ask many people what they ſaw, and they will tell you, they ſaw no more than I did, who was not preſent ; in ſhort, the whole day has been dedicated to this tragedy. I ſhall know more particulars to-morrow, and you ſhall have them at ſecond-hand.

It is ſaid that the ſiege of Maeſtricht is begun ; that of Philippsburg ſtill continues ; this is a melancholy proſpect for the ſpectators. Our little friend [1] made me laugh very heartily this morning. She ſays, that Madame de Rochefort, in all her grief, has preſerved an extreme regard for Madame de Monteſpan ; and ſhe mentioned to me the way in which, amidſt her ſighs and ſobs, ſhe declared how great an affection ſhe had all her life felt for that lady. Are you malicious enough to be as much diverted with this as I have been ?

I have another little ſtory for you, but M. de Grignan muſt not read it. The *little worthy* (M. de Fieſque), who has not wit enough for invention, has ſaid very innocently, that, being one day at the *mouſe-trap's*,[2] ſhe ſaid to him, after a converſation of two or three hours, " *Little worthy*, I have ſomething upon my mind againſt you."—" What is it, madam ? "—" You do not worſhip the Virgin ; ah ! you do not worſhip the Virgin : this gives me great uneaſineſs." I wiſh you may be wiſer than I am, and that this ridiculous ſtory may not ſtrike you as it has ſtruck me.

They ſay L . . . [3] has found his dear rib writing a letter which did not please him : the affair has made a great noiſe.

[1] Madame de Coulanges.

[2] The mouſe-trap is Madame de Lionne, as appears by a witticiſm of Madame Cornuel's, mentioned in a Letter of the 17th April, 1676. The *Amours des Gaules* inform us that M. de Fieſque was her lover in title of office, whom the great number of his rivals could not prevail upon to reſign it.

[3] M. de Louvigny, ſecond ſon of Marſhal de Grammont. D'Hacqueville was the intimate friend of his family.

D'Hacqueville is very busy accommodating matters between them : you may imagine it was not from him I had the story : but it is, nevertheless, true.

LETTER CVI

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, July 22, 1676.

Yes, my dear, this is exactly what I wish ; I am perfectly contented, and even overpaid for the time I have lost, by the happy clash of M. de Grignan's sentiments with mine. He will be very glad to have you with him, this summer at Grignan. I have considered his interest at the expense of what is dearest to me in the whole world ; and he, in his turn, is solicitous to favour me by not suffering you to return to Provence, and by making your journey hither a month or six weeks sooner ; which gives me true pleasure, and prevents your encountering the cold of winter and bad roads. Nothing can be better than this arrangement ; it gives me all the joys of hope, which are so much coveted and esteemed. This, then, is fixed ; I shall often speak of it, and often thank you for your compliance. My carriage shall meet you at Briare, if we have any water in the river. The people pass over the Seine every day on foot, and insult the two stately bridges that lead into the isle.

I have just written to the Chevalier, who was uneasy about my health ; I have informed him that I am very well, but cannot close my hand, nor dance the *bourrée* : these two delightful faculties I must be contented to dispense with for a time ; but when you come, you will make a complete cure. I have told you that I dined the other day at Sully at the President Amelot's, in company with d'Hacqueville, Corbinelli, Coulanges, and the good Abbé. I was pleased to re-visit a house where I passed my youth, when I was troubled with no rheumatism. However, though my hand still refuses to close,

I have so well recovered the use of it that I am satisfied with the portion of health I enjoy ; all my fear is that I shall grow fat again too soon, and lose the advantage of being seen by you while my back continues flat. Entertain no longer, my dear, any concern for my health, and think only of coming to see me. Our friend Corbinelli is with me, but he will give you an account of himself. Villebrune says he has cured me ; let him have the credit of it ; he is not in a situation to neglect anything, that may procure him such patients as the Vardes and Monceaux ; he does well to engage them by any means. Vardes tells Corbinelli that, from this idea, he reveres him as the god of medicine. They may very well amuse themselves with him, on this account, and on many others ; he is like a frighted bird ; at a loss where to find a bough on which to repose in safety.

Let me tell you a little more of La Brinvilliers. She died as she lived, that is to say, very resolutely. She entered the place where she expected to have been put to the torture, and seeing three large vessels of water, "This," said she, "must certainly be to drown me ; for, considering the smallness of my size, they can never pretend to make me drink so much." She heard her sentence read without the least token of fear or weakness ; and towards the latter part of it, she desired them to begin it again, telling them that the circumstance of the cart had struck her so much as to divert her attention from the rest. On her way to execution, she desired her confessor to place the executioner before her, that she might not see that rascal Desgrais, who had taken her. Desgrais preceded the cart on horseback. Her confessor reproved her for the sentiment, upon which she asked pardon, and submitted to endure the disagreeable sight. She mounted the ladder and the scaffold alone, bare-footed ; and the executioner was a quarter of an hour dressing, shaving, and preparing her for the execution : this caused a great murmur among the crowd, and was certainly cruel. The next day her bones were gathered up, as relics by the people, who said she was a saint. She had two confessors, one of whom told her that she ought to reveal everything ; the other, that she ought

not: she laughed at this diversity of opinions between the learned fathers, and said, she believed she might very conscientiously do which of the two she pleased; and it pleased her to reveal nothing. By this means Penautier is come off whiter than snow; the public, however, is not satisfied, and seems still to entertain some little suspicion. But see the misfortune of it: this creature refused to reveal what they wanted to know, and revealed what nobody asked her to do. For instance, she said M. Fouquet had sent Glaser, the apothecary they employed in preparing their poisons, into Italy, to procure an herb, which is, it seems, a choice ingredient in their mysterious compositions; and that she had heard of this at Sainte Croix. You see what pains is taken to load this poor unfortunate man with crimes and to complete his destruction; but the truth of this information is much suspected. A thousand other things are said, but this must suffice for to-day.

It is said M. de Luxembourg intends to undertake some great exploit to succour Philippsburg; it is a very hazardous attempt. The siege of Maestricht is continued, but Marshal d'Humières is going to take Aire,[1] as I said the other day, as if engaged with the enemy in a game at chess. He has taken all the troops that were intended for Marshal de Créqui; and the general officers who were named for this army are returned to Germany, such as La Trousse, the Chevalier du Plessis, and many others. Our youths remain with M. de Schomberg. I had rather they were there, than with Marshal d'Humières. M. de Schomberg favoured our siege, and the fortifications of Condé, as Villahermosa[2] favoured the siege of Maestricht, and the Prince of Orange. All this savours of a warm campaign; but, in the meantime, nothing but amusement is seen at Versailles; every day there are new pleasures, comedies, concerts, and suppers on the water. They play every day in the King's apartment; the Queen, the ladies, and the courtiers; their favourite game, at present, is *reversis*. The King and Madame de Montespan keep

[1] This place was taken on the 31st of July.
[2] The General of the Spanish troops.

a bank at one table ; the Queen and Madame de Soubise, who plays while the Queen retires to prayers, are at another. At the other tables are the Prince and M. de Créqui, Dangeau, and Langlée. They game so high as to win or lose every day, two or three thousand louis d'ors. Madame de Nevers [1] is beautiful as the day, and charms all the world, without exciting envy. Mademoiselle de Thianges, her sister, is tall, and has all the requisites to form a fine woman. The Hôtel de Grancey continues to be frequented as it used to be ; no change is to be seen there. The Chevalier de Lorraine is very languid ; his sickly appearance might excite suspicion of his having been poisoned if Madame de Brinvilliers had been his heir. The Duke takes up his summer quarters there ; but Madame de Rohan goes to Lorges : this is a little embarrassing. Do you not wish to hear some news from Denmark ? I send you a letter I have just received from the Princess de Tarente. It will give you pleasure to learn this instance of lenity in the King : it is diminishing punishments instead of increasing them.[2] I have received your letter of the fifteenth, informing me of your intentions as to your journey ; you speak of it with so much affection, that my heart is pierced to the very centre. I am surprised to find in myself such a sense of justice, and consideration for the Grignans, as to leave you with them until October : I cannot, however, think without regret, on the loss of so much time, which passes away in your absence, when I might have had you with me. I discover, on this occasion, repentances and follies, which draw upon me the raillery of d'Hacqueville ; he knows that you are, in the meantime, paying the attendance you justly owe to the Archbishop of Arles. Do you not find great satisfaction in being capable of doing whatever reason prescribes to you ? I perceive that you know at present, better than I do, how to pay a just submission to its dictates.

[1] Gabrielle de Damas, daughter of Claude Leonor, Marquis de Thianges, and of Gabrielle de Rochechouart Mortemart.

[2] She alludes to Griffenfeldt : the King had changed his sentence from death to imprisonment. But what Madame de Sévigné adds is a painful recollection of the unjust severity with which Louis had aggravated the sentence of Fouquet by the change he made in it.

I yesterday made the same reflection you have made on Penautier, that his table will be little frequented. I know not how La M . . . will behave towards her husband, but she has never been accused of having changed her gallant; d'Hacqueville could, if he pleased, tell us pleasant stories of her. I cannot sufficiently praise the waters of Vichy; they have given me new strength. I am well, for the remains of my disorder are not worth mentioning; when you are here, I will be under your direction; till then, I must think of Livri: I am almost suffocated here, and want air and exercise. You will recognize me by this. The reason you assign for being delighted that M. de Marseilles is created a Cardinal, is precisely the same as mine; he will no longer have the joy, or the hope, of being raised to that dignity.

They tell us wonders from Germany: stupid people! they suffer themselves to be drowned by a little rivulet, and have not the wit to turn its course! It is believed that M. de Luxembourg will beat them, and that they will not take Philippsburg. It is not our fault, if they render themselves unworthy of being our enemies. My son is in M. de Schomberg's army, which is now the safest. What do you say to me from the Grignans, who are at present with you? I embrace them all, and salute the Archbishop with great respect.

LETTER CVII

To the Same

Paris, Wednesday, July 29, 1676.

We have here a change of scene, which will appear as agreeable to you, as it does to every one else. I was on Saturday at Versailles with the Villars. You know the ceremony of attending on the Queen at her toilet, at mass, and at dinner; but there is now no necessity of being stifled with the heat, and with the crowd, while their Majesties dine; for at three, the King and Queen, Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle,



MARIE THÉRÈSE, INFANTA OF SPAIN

Wife of Louis XIV

[*face p. 236*

the Princes and Princesses, Madame de Montespan and her train, the courtiers, and the ladies, in short, the whole Court of France, retire to that fine apartment of the King's, which you know. It is furnished with the utmost magnificence ; they know not there what it is to be incommoded with heat ; and pass from one room to another without being crowded. A game at reversis gives a form to the assembly, and fixes everything. The King and Madame de Montespan keep a bank together. Monsieur, the Queen, and Madame de Soubise, Dangeau, and Langlée, with their companies, are at different tables. The baize is covered with a thousand louis d'ors ; they use no other counters. I saw Dangeau play, and could not help observing how awkward others appeared in comparison of him. He thinks of nothing but his game, though he scarcely seems to attend to it ; he gains where others lose ; takes every advantage ; nothing escapes or distracts him ; in short, his good conduct defies fortune. Thus two hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand crowns in a month, are added to his account-book under the head, *received*.[1] He had the complaisance to say I was a partner with him in the bank, by which means I was seated very commodiously. I bowed to the King in the way you taught me ; and he returned my salutation, as if I had been young and handsome. The Queen talked to me of my illness, nor did she leave you unmentioned. The Duke paid me a thousand of those unmeaning compliments, which he bestows so liberally. M. de Lorges attacked me in the name of the Chevalier de Grignan ; and, in short, *tutti quanti* (all the rest). You know what it is to receive a word from every one who passes you. Madame de Montespan talked to me of Bourbon,

[1] In the eulogium of Dangeau, Fontenelle notices his singular superiority in the art of games. He made the most learned calculations, without seeming to pay the least attention to them. Having asked a favour of the King, he promised to grant it on condition that during the time in which he was engaged at play, he should put his request into verse, confining himself to exactly a hundred lines. After the game was over, in which he had appeared no more occupied than usual, he recited his hundred lines to the King, fairly counted. It was not play alone that made his fortune. He was a complete courtier, a species of perfection which leads to many vices and many follies. By this means he furnished Bruyère with the traits of one of his most finished portraits, the character of Pamphilus. (*Chapitre des Grands.*)

and desired me to tell her how I liked Vichy, and whether I had found any benefit there. She said that Bourbon, instead of removing the pain from her knee, had given her the tooth-ache. Her beauty and her shape are really surprising ; she is much thinner than she was ; and yet neither her eyes, her lips, nor her complexion, are injured. She was dressed in French point ; her hair in a thousand curls, and the two from her temples very low upon her cheeks ; she wore on her head black ribbons, intermixed with the pearls, which once belonged to the Maréchale de l'Hôpital, diamond pendants of great value, and three or four bodkins. In a word, she appeared a triumphant beauty, calculated to raise the admiration of all the foreign ambassadors. She has heard that complaints were made of her having prevented all France from seeing the King ; she has restored him, as you see, and you cannot imagine the delight this has occasioned nor the splendour it has given to the Court. This agreeable confusion, without confusion, of all the most select persons in the kingdom, lasts from three o'clock till six. If any couriers arrive the King retires to read his letters, and returns to the assembly. There is always music, to which he occasionally listens, and which has an admirable effect ; in the meantime, he chats with the ladies, who are accustomed to have that honour. They leave off their game at the hour I mentioned, without the trouble of reckoning, because they use no marks or counters. The pools are of five, six, or seven hundred, and sometimes of a thousand or twelve hundred, louis d'ors. In the beginning each person pools twenty ; that makes a hundred, and the dealer afterwards pools ten. The person who holds the quinola is entitled to four louis ; they pass, and when they play before the pool is taken, it is a forfeit of sixteen, to teach them not to play out of turn. They talk incessantly. "How many hearts have you ? I have two ; I have three ; I have one ; I have four." Dangeau is pleased with this little tattle ; he discovers the cards they have in their hands, he draws his consequences, and is directed in his play by their indiscretion : I observed with pleasure his great skill and dexterity.

At six they take the air in calèches ; the King and Madame de Montespan, the Prince and Madame de Thianges, and Mademoiselle d'Heudicourt, upon the little seat before, which seems to her a place in paradise. You know how these calèches are made ; they do not sit face to face in them, but all look the same way. The Queen was in another with the Princesses ; the whole Court followed in different equipages, according to their different fancies. They went afterwards in gondolas upon the canal, where there was music : at ten the comedy began, and at twelve they concluded the day with the Spanish entertainment of *media noche* : thus we passed the Saturday. But we came from thence in the afternoon. If I were to tell you how many talked to me of you, how many inquired after you, how many asked me questions without waiting for answers, how many I neglected to answer, how little they cared, and how much less I did, you would own that I had given you a very natural description of *l'iniqua corte* (the wicked court) : however, it never was so agreeable ; every one wishes it may continue. Madame de Nevers is very pretty, very modest, very innocent : her beauty makes me think of you. M. de Nevers is the gayest creature in the world ; his wife loves him passionately. Mademoiselle de Thianges is a more regular beauty than her sister, but not half so charming. M. de Maine is incomparable ; his wit is astonishing, the things he says are beyond imagination. Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Thianges, *Guelphs* and *Ghibelins*,[1] are all assembled. Madame paid me a thousand attentions on account of the good Princess de Tarente. Madame de Monaco was at Paris. The Prince paid a visit the other day to Madame de la Fayette : that Prince,

A la cui spada ogni vittoria è certa.[2]

How is it possible not to be flattered by such a distinction, especially since he is not inclined to obtrude his civilities on the ladies ? He talks of the war, and expects news like the rest. We tremble a little at what we may hear from Germany.

[1] Two celebrated factions, one taking the part of the Popes and the other of the Emperors.

[2] Whose sword is certain of victory.

It is said, however, that the Rhine is so swelled by the melted snow from the mountains, that the enemy is more embarrassed than we are. Rambure has been killed by one of his soldiers, who was discharging his musket very innocently. The siege of Aire continues ; we have loſt some lieutenants in the Guards, and some soldiers. Schomberg's army is perfectly safe. Madame de Schomberg has begun to love me again : the Baron profits by it, in the extreme caresses of his general. The *petit glorieux* (the Chevalier de Grignan) has no more to do than the reſt. He may perhaps be uneasy at this, but if he be ambitious of a wound or contusion, he muſt give it himself. God grant he may continue in this idleness. These, my dear, are terrific accounts : you will either be very much tired with or very much amused by them, for they cannot be indifferent to you. I wish you may be in the humour you are in sometimes, when you say, "Why will you not talk to me? well! I wonder at my mother, who would rather die than say a single word to me." Oh! if you are not contented now, I am sure it is not my fault, any more than it is yours if I am not contented with the death of de Ruyter.

There are passages in your letters that are excellent. You say truly on the subject of the marriage that prudence directs it, but that it is a little late in the day. Continue me in the good graces of M. de la Garde, and always remember me to M. de Grignan. The similarity of our opinions on the subject of your departure has renewed our friendship.

You think that I have always a fancy to speak wonders of the Grand Maſter : I do not absolutely deny it ; but I thought you would have taken it for raillery, when I told you the desire he has to become a Marshal of France, and to enjoy that dignity in its ancient luſtre. But you seem inclined to oppose whatever I say on this subject ; the world is extremely partial : its partiality has been very apparent in the case of La Brinvilliers. Never were such horrid crimes treated so mildly : she was not put to the queſtion ; they even gave her hopes of a pardon, and such hopes, that she did not expect to die ; nay, even when she was mounting the scaffold, she asked whether it was in earneſt ; at length, her ashes are

dispersed by the wind : and her confessor says she is a saint. The first President made choice of this doctor as a person very proper to attend her ; and it was the very same they had fixed upon. Have you never observed those who play tricks on cards ? they shuffle them a long time, and bid you take which ever you please ; they would have you think it is indifferent to them : you take a card, and think it to be your own choice, but find it to be precisely the one they designed you should take. The comparison is perfectly just. Marshal de Villeroi said, the other day, that Penautier would be ruined by this affair ; Marshal de Grammont replied, that he might save the expense of keeping a table. The conversation of these two great men might furnish a pretty subject for an epigram. I suppose you know, it is believed, that a hundred thousand crowns have been dispersed in proper hands to facilitate matters : innocence seldom incurs such profusion. Nothing can be more just than what you have said of this horrible woman. I believe you may be easy, for it is not possible she can be in paradise ; a soul so deeply stained with guilt must surely be separated from others. We are entirely of your opinion, that it is far better to assassinate. This is a mere trifle, in comparison of being eight months over killing a father ; and receiving in the meantime his complaints and caresses ; to which this pious daughter answered, only by redoubling the dose.

Tell the Archbishop of Arles what the first President has advised me to do for my health. I have shown my hands, and almost my knees to Langeron, that he may tell you exactly how I am. I use a sort of liniment, which I am told will complete my cure. I shall not have the cruelty to plunge myself into bullock's blood till the dog-days are over. But it is you, my dear child, that must complete my cure. If M. de Grignan could but conceive the pleasure he does me in approving your journey it would recompense him for the six weeks he is to be without you.

Madame de la Fayette is on very good terms with Madame de Schomberg. The latter is wonderfully obliging to me, and so is her husband to my son. Madame de Villars thinks

seriously of going to Savoy ; she will meet you upon the road. Corbinelli always adores you : he takes infinite care of me. The *worthy* begs you will believe that he shall have the truest joy on seeing you ; he is fully persuaded that I stand in great need of this remedy, and you know the friendship he has for me. Livri is continually recurring to my thoughts, and I frequently complain of being stifled here, in order to make them all the more ready to acquiesce with my journey.

Adieu, my dearest, my best-beloved. You entreat me to love you ; I willingly consent to it, it shall not be said that I refuse you anything.

LETTER CVIII

To the Same

Paris, Friday, August 21, 1676.

I came here this morning to execute the commissions of M. de la Garde. I alighted at the house of the good d'Escars, whom I found in a bilious fever, but full of kindness and good-will. The mantua-maker, Madame le Moine, was with her, and she was surrounded with the finest point, French and Spanish, in the world. I dined at M. de Même's and at three returned to Madame d'Escars ; on entering the court, I met Madame de Vins and d'Hacqueville, who came very politely to see me. We selected a very beautiful gown and petticoat, some gold and silver stuff for a toilet, lace for the petticoat and for the toilet, with a great many other articles, all of which will be incomparably beautiful : but as I have ordered them all in my own name, and on very short credit, let me beg you not to leave me exposed to the uncertainty of the payment of M. de la Garde's pensions, but to send me a bill of exchange. M. Colbert is a little indisposed ; were you to know the use that is made of this pretext, even with regard to your pension, you would easily be convinced, that nothing is equal to a bill of exchange ; as for the poor courtiers, who are accustomed

to patience, they will wait the happy moment at the Royal Treasury. The handsome Abbé [1] is this moment coming in ; he came to see me on Wednesday at Livri, we had a long conversation about your affairs. The coadjutor certainly ought never to be proposed,[2] but as a most proper and worthy person, without its even coming to light, that he has ever bestirred himself in the least about it ; since he ought to appear to the world as fixed and satisfied in every respect with his present situation. We would only endeavour to make sure of the Archbishop (of Arles) ; that is, to dispose him to receive such other person, for coadjutor, as might be proposed to him ; and even this must be transacted merely by the confessor, it not being within M. de Pomponne's district, who, however, would certainly not fail to support it, if occasion offered. But it is believed here, that, notwithstanding the report that has been current, of M. de Mende's refusal of Alby, he will yet accept it ; if this be true, all our conferences are in vain. As for the Government, the son is to have the reversion of it, and *matame te Lutre* will be well enough satisfied with this acknowledgment, on her quitting the dress [3] she has worn so long. We are also told that Théobon, whether she has merited this establishment or not, would be very glad to have it : so you see on what this affair turns. I love the handsome Abbé for his great zeal in your affairs, and for calling so often to consult about them with me, who, by the by, am far from being such a fool in this respect, I suppose from the interest I take in them, as I am in all other worldly matters.

We spent a very pleasant evening at Livri ; and have this day come to a determination with the great d'Hacqueville, that all our solicitations are in vain for this time, but that we ought not, for all that, to lose so fair an occasion of presenting our request. Madame de Vins entreats me to return to-morrow, and to be at Madame de Villars' between five and six, where she will meet me. We may possibly see

[1] The Abbé de Grignan, brother to the coadjutor of Arles.

[2] The business in question was the Archbishopric of Alby, which was thought to be still vacant, from a report that M. de Mende had refused it.

[3] Madame de Ludre was canoness of Poussai.

M. de Pomponne in the evening, who will return from Pomponne, where Madame de Vins could not go, on account of a lawsuit, for she is never without one, which is always to be determined to-morrow. I must own I feel myself strongly tempted by her proposal ; so that, to all appearance, I shall put off my departure till Sunday, when I propose to hear mass at Livri. They smell a rat at *Quanto's*, but no one can tell exactly where : the lady whom I mentioned to you has been named ; but as the gentry of that country are esteemed deep politicians it is possibly not there either. One thing, however, is past all doubt : the gentleman seems gay, cheerful, and quite himself ; whilst the damsel appears sad, confused, and sometimes in tears. I will tell you more of this when I am able.

Madame de Maintenon is gone to Maintenon for three weeks. The King has sent Le Nôtre to embellish that beautifully ugly place. I have as yet seen nothing of the handsome Madame de Coulanges, nor of Corbinelli. Marshal Schomberg's army is going to succour Maestricht ; though everybody thinks the enemy will not await his coming, either because the place is already taken, or that the siege has been raised ; they are, it seems, not strong enough. My dear, amiable child, adieu.

LETTER CIX

To the Same

Paris, at Madame d'Escars,
Friday, September 4, 1676.

I dined at Livri, and came here at two o'clock : and am now surrounded with all our fine dresses ; the linen appears to me perfectly beautiful and well chosen : in short, I am satisfied with every article, and doubt not but it will give you as much satisfaction as it has me : our stuffs have succeeded as well as heart could wish. To say the truth, they have cost

me abundance of pains : I am exactly in the situation of Molière's physician, who wipes his brow as if he had performed a miracle in restoring speech to a girl who had never been dumb. Yet for all that, we cannot sufficiently thank the good d'Escars ; she was really very ill, and yet took infinite pains in the execution of this commission : I could not think of letting so many fine things go without first taking a parting glance at them. I am now writing to you, and without having seen a soul return to Livri to sup with Madame de Coulanges and the *worthy* ; I shall be there at seven. Can anything be more charming than this proximity ? I have just received a note from d'Hacqueville who thinks me at Livri : he will needs have me go to Vichy ; but I fear I should overheat myself, and besides I have not the least occasion for such a journey. I am going to set about curing my hands with the greatest calmness imaginable during this vintage ; I take these marks of his friendship in extreme good part, as I certainly ought, but will not, for all that, implicitly obey him. I have grave opinions not a few on my side of the question ; and what is a more powerful argument with me still, I find myself in perfect health.

Quanto has not been once at the dramatical representations, nor at the card tables more than once. This wants explaining. Every lady is a beauty, but this is the language of courtiers : the beauty of beauties, however, is gay, which is a good sign. Madame de Maintenon is returned ; she promises Madame de Coulanges to take a journey purely on her account ; a prospect which I assure you is far from turning her brain, whatever it might produce in others ; she suspects her, with all the calmness in the word, at Livri : nothing can be more obliging than she is to me. Marshal d'Albert is dying. D'Hacqueville will inform you of the gazette news, and of the great quantity of cannon and ammunition we have taken.

The *mite* (Madame de Senneterre) is without her ring-dove, at least that of the finest wing. Do you not think she is a fool for her pains ? Is this a way to bring customers ? M. de Marsillac is gone to Gourville and to Poitou ; M. de Rochefoucauld is going after them, though it is a jaunt of a month at the lowest computation. But, my dear, it is high time for

you to begin talking of your own journey : are you not still disposed to set out on your part, as soon as your husband is willing on his ? This forwardness is not only convenient to you, but inexpressibly satisfactory to me. I approve of your bathing extremely : it will prevent you from being pulverized ; invigorate yourself, therefore, and bring us as much good health as you possibly can.

LETTER CX

To the Same

Livri, Friday, September 11, 1676.

You are extremely witty on the subject of our coadjutor. It seems you have resumed the liberties we took the year I was at Grignan ; how we roasted him on the stories M. de Grignan told, that the coadjutor might go boldly anywhere without fear of the gabelle ! I do not think there ever was a person of a happier turn for raillery than he is, not even M. de V . . . , who, if we may believe Madame de Cornuel,[1] has placed a good porter at his door, that is, given his wife a sad disorder. The other day a very decrepit frightful old woman presented herself before the King at dinner. The Prince pushed her back, and asked her what she wanted : " Sir," said she, " I would fain have prayed His Majesty to have obtained leave for me to speak with M. de Louvois." The King said to her, " Apply to M. de Rheims ; he can do it much better than I can."[2] Every one present was delighted with this answer. Nanteuil,[3] on the other hand, begged His Majesty would be pleased to command M. de Calvo to sit for his picture. He is forming a Cabinet, in which it seems he intends to give

[1] Madame de Cornuel was famous for her bon-mots.

[2] There is another account of this anecdote. It is said that it was to Madame Dufrênoi, the Minister's mistress, that the King sent this old woman ; which was more humorous, though less delicate.

[3] Famous for portraits in pastel, and a celebrated engraver.

him a place. Everything you foresaw with respect to Maestricht, had happened like the accomplishment of a prophecy. The King gave M. de Roquelaure yesterday the Government of Guyenne. This is long expectation well recompensed at last.

It is the general opinion that *Quanto's* star begins to wane. There is nothing now but tears, vexations, disappointments, and affected gaiety ; in short, my child, everything has an end. Every one is now upon the watch, observing, conjecturing, divining, and faces are thought to shine like stars of the first magnitude, that but a month ago were deemed unworthy to be compared with some others : but the cards go merrily on, whilst the fair one confines herself to her own apartment. Some tremble with fear, others laugh ; some wish the continuance of things on their present footing, others long for a new scene ; in short, this is a crisis worthy of attention ; at least if we may give credit to those who affect to be the deepest in the secret. Little Rochefort [1] is to be married immediately to her cousin de Nangis ; she is twelve years old. If she has a child soon, the Chancellor's lady may say, " Daughter, go tell your daughter that her daughter's daughter is crying." Madame de Rochefort [2] has taken refuge in a convent while this match is being made, and appears still inconsolable.

You know I returned here on Wednesday morning : I am delighted to be alone. I walk out, I amuse myself with reading and work, and I go to church ; in short, I ask pardon of the company I expect, but I own I do wondrous well without them. My Abbé remained at Paris that he might talk to your Abbé and desire him to give M. Colbert the letter M. de Grignan wrote him before he set out. Had the Abbé Têtu been here, I should have been glad of his company in the absence of the Abbé de Grignan, but he, it seems, is in Touraine. It is true he likes there should be neither master nor companion in the families he honours with his friendship. Yet can you

[1] She was great-granddaughter of the Chancellor de Seguier's lady.

[2] Madeleine de Laval-Bois-Dauphin, widow of Marshal de Rochefort, who died 22nd May, 1676.

think it possible he should have neither the one nor the other at our little friend's ?[1] I tell him every day that his regard for her must needs be very great, since he makes her *swallow snakes* both summer and winter ; for, in my opinion, the dog-days are as disagreeable as the carnival : thus the whole year is but one continued penance. They pretend to say that the *friend's friend*[2] is no longer what she has been ; so that we must not calculate upon a strong head, since it could not support the hurricane of this good country. Yours is a wonderful one indeed to endure your north-east winds with so much patience, and even good humour. When you are in good spirits, which I can easily discover by your letters, I share your cheerfulness : you are apprehensive you sometimes say silly things to me : good heavens ! it is I who should make that complaint, who am constantly committing that fault, and who ought to blush at it, when I think how much my years surpass yours, and how much younger I am in understanding. It is true I should never have suspected you of calling La Garde *your ace of hearts* ; it was a charming fancy ; but it almost kills me to think that, after all, it may be a sort of presage of his being soon called by that pleasing title, *bon jeu, bon argent.* I hope you will acquaint me with all the particulars of that long-expected wedding. I am astonished he should have retained this whim so long in his head : it is a strange prospect for one, who could have done so well without it. When you mention any follies of this kind, I fancy you are thinking of me. We laughed very heartily at Grignan. You give me an excellent picture of La Vergne ; I long to see him ; I have scarcely ever heard so many praises of one man. Did I inform you that Penautier takes the air sometimes in his prison ? He sees all his relations and friends, and passes his time in wondering at the injustice of the world : we wonder at it as much as he can do.

Madame de Coulanges informs me she is grieved that she cannot return for these four or five days ; that she is obliged to go about an intendancy, which she hears is vacant ; that she is to wait on the King, and what is worse, on M. Colbert.

[1] Madame de Coulanges.
[2] Madame de Maintenon.

I advised her to desire the King, as the old woman did, to procure her an audience of M. Colbert ; I told her, at the same time, to make use of her eyes and ears, when she is in that part of the world, and to be sure not to lose the use of her tongue when she comes here. She informs me, as the rest do, that Madame de Soubise is set out for Lorges ; this journey does great honour to her virtue. It is said there has been a thorough reconciliation, perhaps too good a one. Marshal d'Albert has left Madame de Rohan a hundred thousand livres, this methinks savours strongly of restitution. My son tells me that the enemy were for a considerable while very near us ; that on M. de Schomberg's approach they retired ; that on his nearer approach they retired still farther : in short, that they are now at the distance of six leagues, and will be soon at the distance of twelve ; never was there so good-natured an enemy, *I love them dearly* ; a pretty way of abusing words truly ; for I have no other way of telling you I love you but that I make use of for the Allies.

LETTER *CXI

Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy

Livri, September 18, 1676.

Every good dog comes from a good breed : you see, my dear cousin, what our little Rabutin is doing already. And so he is a prisoner. Is he not wounded ? And how will you redeem him ? Are the ransoms for officers of his rank fixed ? By the way in which, I am informed, he pushed himself forward, I suppose he was ambitious to take the enemy. I hope you will send me news of him, and of yourself, for I am much more interested about you than I say I am. How has the lawsuit terminated, of which the account, contrary to custom, was so entertaining ? How is my niece de Coligny, and her little boy ? He must be a great comfort to her, and this idea gives me pleasure, because I rejoice in her happiness. Is Madame

de Bussy as well as usual ? Here are a number of questions for you. If you should be inclined to follow my example, and ask me as many, I will answer them beforehand. I am here, in this pretty place, which you are so well acquainted with, and much better and more comfortable it seems to me, than at Paris, at least for a short time. I am using some remedies for the recovery of my health, and am putting my arms into the vintage tubs, hoping that my hands, which are not yet closed, will resume their ordinary functions. You ought to send me some scraps of your memoirs. I know persons who have seen a part of them, who do not love you so much as I do, though they may have greater merit.

LETTER CXII

From Madame de Sévigné to the Countess de Grignan

Paris, September 25, 1676,
at Madame de Coulanges.

Indeed, my child, this poor little woman is very ill : this is the eleventh day of her illness, which seized her at Châville as she was returning from Versailles. Madame le Tellier was seized with it at the same time, and returned immediately to Paris, where she received the viaticum yesterday. Beaujeu, Madame de Coulanges's waiting maid, was struck by the same arrow : she has followed her mistress ; not a medicine was prescribed for the one that was not ordered at the same time for the other ; purgatives, bleeding, the sacrament, the paroxysms, the delirium, were exactly alike in both. God grant this fellowship may cease, for Beaujeu has just received extreme unction and, it is thought, will hardly live till morning. We fear the return of the fit which Madame de Coulanges may have to-morrow, as hers and her maid's have been so similar. This it must be owned is a dreadful disorder : I have witnessed the terrible bleeding the physicians prescribe to the poor creatures who happen to be afflicted with it ; and

as I am sensible that I have no veins, I declared yesterday to the first President of the Court of Aids that if ever I am dangerously ill I shall beg him to send M. Sanguin to me immediately ; I am resolved on this. The very sight of those gentry is sufficient to deter us from putting our poor bodies in their power.[1] The death of Beaujeu is one of their back-handed exploits. I have thought of Molière a hundred times since I became a witness of those scenes. I am not without hope, however, that our friend may escape, notwithstanding their vile treatment of her. She is calm at present, and in a sort of slumber, that will give her strength for what may happen during the night.

I have seen Madame de Saint Géran, who is by no means low-spirited : her house will be a constant place of resort where M. de Grignan will pass his evenings very lovingly. She is going to Versailles with the rest. I can assure you she intends to enjoy the fruits of her economy, and to live on the credit of the reputation she has acquired ; it will be a considerable time before she has exhausted her stock. She sends you a thousand compliments ; she is very fat, and very well. You tell me wonders of the friendship of Roquesante ; I am by no means surprised at it, knowing his heart so well as I do. He merits, for many reasons, the distinction you show him. I am quite well, and am overjoyed I had not begun the vintage ; I shall use the other remedies, and when this poor little woman is recovered I shall rest myself for a few days at Livri. Brancas came to-night on foot, on horseback, or in a cart ; he fainted away at the sight of the poor invalid's bed ; no love can exceed his. That I entertain for you is far from being trivial.

I found at Paris a report blown all over the town, which will appear extremely ridiculous to you. There are a thousand

[1] It was not long since the circulation of the blood, proved, if not discovered, by Harvey, had changed the practice of medicine. It gave birth to several systems. "Hence this rage for bleeding, which the partisans of Botal believed themselves more authorized than before to have recourse to in the treatment of diseases ; a rage, which, though so often wearied with systematic murders, only reposed at intervals, and occasionally burst forth again in the schools." It is thus the eloquent and luminous historian of the *Revolutions of Medicine* expresses himself. This is the picture of the epoch in which Madame de Sévigné wrote. Bleeding passed for a universal specific.

people who will tell you of it, but it seems as if you liked my accounts the best. There was a sort of agent of the King of Poland [1] at Court, who was buying up all the finest estates for his master. At length he fixed upon that of Rieux in Brittany, for which he had signed a contract for five hundred thousand livres, requesting that this estate or manor might be made into a Duchy, and the name left blank. He took care to have all sorts of fine privileges and rights annexed to it, male and female, as suited his fancy. The King, and indeed everybody else, thought it must be either for M. d'Arquien, or the Marquis de Béthune. This agent at length presented to his Majesty a letter from the King of Poland, naming the person it was for, guess who? Brisacier, son of the maître des comptes. He had pushed himself into notice by a numerous retinue, and the most ridiculous expenses. The world simply took him for a fool, which is no rarity. But the King of Poland, by I do not know what divination, found out that Brisacier was originally from Poland; by which his name was lengthened by an additional *ski*, and himself became a Pole. The King of Poland adds that Brisacier is his relation, and that formerly when in France he was going to marry his sister. He has sent his mother a golden key, as lady of honour to the Queen. Slander, by way of amusement, gave out that the King of Poland, also by way of amusement, had had some slight inclination for the mother, and that this boy was his son; but the affair is not so for all that; the chimera rests wholly on the good house of Poland. The little agent, however, has blown upon the whole affair, thinking the business he came upon as good as concluded; and the King, as soon as he was informed of the truth, treated this agent as an insolent fellow and a fool, and ordered him to leave Paris, giving him to understand that had it not been for his regard for the King of Poland he would have sent him to the Bastille. His Majesty has written to the King of Poland, complaining in a friendly manner of this intended profanation of the highest honour of the kingdom and considers the protection the King of Poland is said to give this diminutive creature as an imposition, and even calls in

[1] John Sobieski.

question the legality of the character with which he pretends to be invested. He leaves it to M. de Pomponne to enlarge upon this fertile subject. It is said this little agent has made off, so that the affair will probably sleep till the return of the courier.

LETTER CXIII

To the Same

Livri, Friday, November 6, 1676.

Surely there never was so brilliant a letter as your last ; I had some thoughts of sending it back, that you might have the pleasure of perusing it. I could not help wondering while I read it how it was possible to wish so ardently to receive no more. This, however, is the affront I put on your letters : you seem to treat mine much more civilly.

This Reimond is certainly *hem* ! *hem* ! with the head-dress you know so well ; she has dressed in this style, as you properly observe, that she might seem qualified to hear the music of the blessed above ; and our sisters have done the same from the wish of obtaining a fund of seven thousand livres, with a pension of a thousand, by which she is enabled " to go abroad when she likes, and she likes it very often." We have never had such merchandise before, but the beauty of our house causes us to overlook everything ; for my own part, I am quite delighted with it : for in my opinion both her apartments and her voice are divine, *hem, hem.*

The dates you mention in speaking of Madame de Soubise are, thank God, amongst those which have quite escaped my memory. Some marked incivility must certainly have been shown during the festivities at Versailles. Madame de Coulanges informs me that the tooth has disappeared since the

day before yesterday ; in that case you will conclude they can have no tooth against her. You are very amusing upon my friend's [1] illness, and at the same time it is all true. The quartan ague of our friend of the suburbs,[2] is happily at an end. I have sent your letter to the Chevalier,[3] without apprehension or reproof. I love him sincerely ; and as for my *pigeon*, I wish I could give him a kiss ; I have some idea in my head, I know not how truly, that leads me to think I shall one day or other see all these little folks. I cannot understand the eight months child ; pray is he likely to live a century ? I fancy the gentlemen that fought it out so bravely in the streets are in a fair way to live as long. It would really be a very pretty and just punishment for a battle in the street in the midst of summer. Adieu, my dear lovely child, I shall finish this in the good city of Paris.

Friday, at Paris.

So ! here am I. I have been dining at the worthy Bagnol's, where I found Madame de Coulanges in this charming apartment, embellished with the golden rays of the sun, where I have often seen you, almost as beautiful and as brilliant as he. The poor convalescent gave me a hearty welcome, and is now going to write two lines to you ; it is, for aught I know, something from the other world, which I am sure you will be very glad to hear. She has been giving me an account of a new dress called transparencies. Pray, have you heard of it ? It is an entire suit of the finest gold and azure brocade that can be seen, over which is a black robe, either of beautiful English lace, or velvet chenille like the winter laces you have seen : this occasions the name of transparency, which is, you see, a black suit, and a suit of gold and azure, or any other colour, according to the fancy of the wearer, and is all the fashion at present. This was the dress worn at the ball on St. Hubert's day, which lasted a whole half-hour, for nobody would dance. The King pushed Madame d'Heudicourt into the middle of

[1] Madame de Coulanges.
[2] Madame de la Fayette.
[3] De Grignan.

the room by main force ; she obeyed, but at length the combat ended for want of combatants. The fine embroidered bodices destined for Villers-Coterets serve to walk out on an evening, and were worn on St. Hubert's day. The Prince informed the ladies at Chantilly that their transparencies would be a thousand times more beautiful if they would wear them next their skin, which I very much doubt. The Granceys and Monacos did not share in the amusements, because the mother of the latter is ill, and the mother of the *angels* has been at death's door. It is said the Marchioness de la Ferté has been in labour there ever since Sunday, and that Bouchet is at his wit's end.

M. de Langlée has made Madame de Montespan a present of a robe of gold cloth, on a gold ground, with a double gold border embroidered and worked with gold, so that it makes the finest gold stuff ever imagined by the wit of man. It was contrived by fairies in secret, for no living wight could have conceived anything so beautiful. The manner of presenting it was equally mysterious. Madame de Montespan's mantua-maker carried home the suit she had bespoke, having made it fit ill on purpose ; you need not be told what exclamations and scolding there were upon the occasion. "Madam," said the mantua-maker, trembling with fear, "as there is so little time to alter it in, will you have the goodness to try whether this other dress may not fit you better ?" It was produced. "Ah !" cried the lady, "how beautiful ! What an elegant stuff is this ! Pray where did you get it ? It must have fallen from the clouds, for a mortal could never have executed anything like it." The dress was tried on : it fitted to a hair. In came the King. "It was made for you, Madam," said the mantua-maker. Immediately it was concluded that it must be a present from someone ; but from whom ? was the question. "It is Langlée," said the King. "It must be Langlée," said Madame de Montespan, "nobody but Langlée could have thought of so magnificent a present. It is Langlée, it is Langlée !" Everybody exclaims, "It is Langlée, it is Langlée !" The echoes repeat the sound. And I, my child, to be in the fashion, say, "It is Langlée."

From Madame de Coulanges

I am glad I did not die, Madam, since you are to return here this winter. I am now at your house ; I can no longer endure the sight of the chamber and the bed where I lay in the agonies of death. Why do not you come and make your appearance like the reſt, in your transparency ? You will be very glad, no doubt, to save your brocade ; and I could swear there is no one so proper to take the advice of his Highness about it as you. Pray how do you like this fashion ? You are the firſt person I have written to with my own hand : there is something between us, though I know not well what it is. The Abbé Têtu is not yet in winter quarters. Adieu, Madam : I wish for your return with sincerity and ardour.

From Madame de Sévigné

This is an excellent ſtyle for a dead woman. We laughed heartily at what you said of her and M. de la Garde, when you compared the extremity to which they have both been reduced, and from which they have both recovered : this proves that wisdom, like youth, returns to us from a great diſtance. I expect d'Hacqueville and the Chevalier de Grignan every moment to form my council of war, and to inform me of the deſtiny of the poor Baron, whom I left at Livri in a very lame and forlorn condition. Adieu, my dear : if you have come to the determination we wish, I hope my letter will find you on your journey.

LETTER CXIV

To the Same

Livri, Wednesday, November 25, 1676.

As I was walking in this avenue, I saw a courier arrive. " Who is it ? "—" It is Pomier."—" This indeed is admirable. And when will my daughter arrive ? "—" Madam, she muſt be already upon her journey."—" Come, then, let me embrace

you. And is the gift of your assembly granted?"—"It is, Madam."—"At what sum?"—"At eight hundred thousand livres." This is all well; our press is strong, we have nothing to fear; we need only pull the cord; it is strong, too, there is no danger of its breaking. At last, I opened your letter, and am delighted with its contents. I easily discover the two characters, and perceive you are really preparing for your departure. I say nothing of the joy this gives me. To-morrow I set out for Paris with my son; he is no longer in danger. I wrote a line to M. de Pomponne, to recommend our courier to him. You have fine weather for your journey, but I am apprehensive of the frost. The carriage shall meet you wherever you think proper. I am sending away Pomier, that he may go this evening to Versailles, I mean to St. Germain. I blunder in everything. I am so hurried. I am at present perfectly well in health, and embrace you a thousand times.

LETTER CXV

To the Same

Paris, Sunday evening, December 13, 1676.

What do I not owe you, my beloved child, for undergoing so much trouble, fatigue, languor, cold, frost, and broken rest! I have, as it were, suffered all these inconveniences with you; you were never a moment from my thoughts; I followed you everywhere in my imagination; and a thousand times I thought I was not worth the trouble to which you put yourself on my account, I mean with regard to some particular points, for my tenderness and friendship greatly enhance my merit with you. Good God, what a journey, and in what a season! You will arrive precisely on the shortest day of the year, and will consequently bring back the sun to us. I have seen a device which suits me exactly: it is a leafless tree, apparently dead, with this inscription round it, *Fin che sol ritorni* (till the sun returns). What think you of it, my child?

I have now no more to say to you of your journey, nor a single question to ask you upon that subject ; we will draw the curtain over twenty days of the most extreme fatigue and will endeavour to give a different course to your animal spirits, and different ideas to your imagination. I will not go to Melun ; I am apprehensive that a dissipation, so little conducive to repose, might make you pass the night badly ; but I shall expect you to dine with me at Villeneuve St. Georges ; you will find the soup warm, and, without doing injustice to anyone, you will there meet a person who loves you better than the whole world. The Abbé will wait for you in your own apartment, which shall be well lighted and a good fire in it. My dear child, how great is my joy ! Can I ever feel more exquisite happiness ?

[Madame de Grignan arrived at Paris at this period, and did not return to Provence till June, 1677.]

LETTER CXVI

To the Same

Paris, Friday, June 11, 1677.

I cannot help thinking that if I had no pain except in my chest, and you had none except in your head, we should neither of us complain ; but the state of your lungs gives me great uneasiness, and you are equally anxious about my head : well, for your sake I will do more for it than it deserves ; and I beg that you will, in return, take care to wrap yourself in cotton. I am sorry you wrote me so long a letter upon your arrival at Melun ; at that time repose was what you chiefly wanted. Take care of yourself, my dear child ; do not alarm yourself with groundless fears ; endeavour to come and finish your visit, since, as you say, destiny, or rather Providence, has, contrary to all reason, made that which you intended me, so short. You will be much more capable of putting this design in execution when in health, than in your present languishing

ſtate ; and since you are desirous that my heart and head should be perfectly at ease, never think that they can be so if your disorder should increase. What a dismal, what a melancholy day was that of our separation ! You wept, my dear child, and that is an extraordinary thing in you ; in me it is not so, it is the effect of conſtitution. The circumſtance of your ill ſtate of health contributes greatly to increase my sorrow : I think if I had nothing to suffer but being absent from you for a time, I could bear it well enough ; but the idea of your being so thin, of your feeble voice, pale countenance, and altered person is what I am utterly unable to support. If then you are desirous of conferring upon me the greateſt favour I can ask you, make it your chief ſtudy to get the better of the disorder under which you now labour.

Ah, my child, how great is the triumph of Versailles ! What an increase of pride ! What a solid eſtablishment ! What a second Duchess de Valentinois ![1] What pleasure occasioned even by broils and absence ! What a recovery of possession ! I was a whole hour in her apartment ; she lay on the bed full-dressed ; she was taking her repose for the *media noche* (midnight repaſt). I presented her your compliments ; she answered in the moſt polite tones, and praised you highly ; her ſiſter, with all the vain-glory of Nichen, caſt several reflections upon the unhappy *Io*, and laughed at her being so audacious as to complain of her. Picture to yourself everything that ungenerous pride can suggeſt when triumphant, and you will not be far from the mark. It is said that the youngeſt ſiſter will soon resume her former place among the ladies that attend upon Madame.[2] She took a solitary walk yeſterday with La Moreuil, in the garden of Marshal du Plessis ; she went once to hear mass. Adieu, my beloved child ! I have been quite deſtitute, quite sad,

[1] This was a name she gave Madame de Montespan, in allusion to the famous miſtress of Henry the Fourth, who preserved her empire and her charms so long.

[2] The King had a ſtrong attachment for this canoness, called Madame de Ludre, Lady of Honour to Madame. But he soon sacrificed her to the fury and artifices of Madame de Montespan. He sent a present of two hundred thousand francs to this neglected fair one. She refused them, and supported her misfortune with great dignity.

since you left me. We should consider nothing but Providence in this separation ; otherwise it will be impossible to comprehend it ; but perhaps it is the means God makes use of to restore your health. I believe so, I hope so. My dear Count, you have, as it were, answered for it ; make it, therefore, the chief object of your care, I conjure you.

LETTER CXVII

To the Same

Paris, Friday morning, July 2, 1677.

I am going directly to Livri to hear mass. Corbinelli will arrive to-day or to-morrow : I take pleasure in waiting for him upon the high road of Chalons and dragging him out of his coach at the end of the avenue to carry him home and make him spend a day with us : we shall have a good deal of conversation, and I will send you an account of it. I shall return on Sunday next, for a little affair in which I constantly hope to be successful, still prevents me from settling at Livri : to tell you the truth, it is that butterfly I mentioned to my son ; which, at the moment you think it within your reach, eludes your grasp. I meet with nothing but opposition to all my desires, whether of great or little importance. If I did not look up to Providence, I should lose all patience. I leave a servant to bring me my letters. Ah ! my child, I support existence during all other days, merely in expectation of that on which they arrive ; and the moral reflections with which they abound, are always seasonable, when I see how transitory are all human affairs.

Io returned to Versailles immediately after Monsieur ; this intelligence does not make the least noise. *Quanto* and her friend are longer together, and upon more affectionate terms, than they ever were : the ardour of the first years they passed together still subsists, and all restraint is banished, to excite a belief that no empire was ever more firmly established.

I have seen persons who are of opinion that, instead of going to Bouchet when Monsieur is at Paris, and returning to Court when he returns, it would be much better to stay at Paris with Monsieur, and go to the country when he returns to Versailles.[1]

Madame de Coulanges has discontinued her visits to Lyons; her sister is going in her stead. The good-natured Marbœuf has just taken her leave of me; she expresses the highest affection for you, and sends you a thousand remembrances. My son goes frequently to Lille; he is extremely well received there. If you were but once happy, all would be well. Adieu, my dearest child; I wait with impatience to hear of your health, and how the world goes at Grignan. Your little boy gives me great concern. Follow our advice with regard to the timidity of the eldest; if you tease him, you will disconcert him in such a way that he will never recover; this is an affair of the highest importance. The Duke desired me yesterday to give you his compliments, and to tell you that it was owing to his orders that you found the roads so bad; but that you shall, at your return, find them strewed with flowers. My dear child, I now take my leave of you; I love you with uncommon affection; and you return it in a manner which will not fail to make it last. If you wish me to enjoy my health, take care of your own, and pay particular attention to the effect which the air of Grignan has upon you; if it has not a good effect, it must certainly have a bad one.

LETTER CXVIII

To the Same

Livri, Friday, July 16, 1677.

I arrived here yesterday evening, my dear child; the weather is wonderfully fine; I am quite alone, and enjoy a

[1] This relates to Madame de Ludre, attached to the family of Monsieur, as lady in waiting to Madame, who appeared to always follow the King.

repose, a silence, a leisure, which gives me the highest delight. Will you not allow me to amuse myself by chatting with you a little? I have no society, at present, but you: when I have written to Provence, I have nothing more to do: you cannot surely call a letter once a week to Madame de Lavardin, a correspondence. Letters of business are neither long nor frequent. But you, my child, have ten or twelve correspondents, by all of whom you are idolized, and these I have heard you reckon over and over. The subject of all their letters is the same, and yet it requires twelve to answer them: thus it happens every week, and thus are you plagued and tormented, whilst they all assure you that they do not require an answer, but merely three or four lines, to inform them of your health. This is the language of them all, and of me among the rest: in short, we are all together too hard for you. But we behave with all the address and politeness of the man in the play, who beats another with an air of complaisance, asking his pardon all the while, and saying with the utmost respect, I am very sorry, sir, but you will have it so.[1] The application is so just, and so easily made, that I think it unnecessary to point it out.

Wednesday evening after I had written to you, I was invited in the kindest manner possible to sup at Gourville's, with Madame de Schomberg, Madame de Frontenac, Madame de Coulanges, the Duke, M. de la Rochefoucauld, Barillon, Briole, Coulanges, Sévigné: the Master of the House received us in a place newly erected; it was a garden of the Hôtel de Condé; there were water-works, bowers, terraces, six hautboys in one corner, six violins in another, the most melodious flutes; a supper which seemed to be prepared by enchantment, an admirable bass-viol, and a resplendent moon, which witnessed all our pleasures. If you had not an antipathy to all sorts of entertainments, you would have regretted not being of the party. It is true, indeed, we might have complained of the same misfortune which you noticed when you were there, and which will always happen upon such occasions; that is to say, that a sort of tacit agreement is entered into,

[1] See Molière's *Comedy of the Forced Marriage.*

that not a word shall be spoken. Barillon, Sévigné, and I could not help laughing, for your observation immediately occurred to us. The next day, which was Thursday, I went to Court, and exerted myself so well that, as the good Abbé says, I obtained a slight injustice, after having suffered so many great ones, by receiving two hundred louis d'ors, in part of payment of seven hundred, which I ought to have had eight months ago, and which, they tell me, I shall receive in the winter. After this wretched expedition, I came here in the evening to take a little rest, and am determined to stay till the eighth of next month, when I must prepare for Burgundy and Vichy. Perhaps I may sometimes go and dine at Paris. Madame de la Fayette is much better. To-morrow I shall go to Pomponne; the great d'Hacqueville has been there since yesterday; I shall bring him back with me. Your brother visits the fair one, and entertains her highly; she is naturally of a very gay disposition; the mother and grandmother receive him well. Corbinelli will come to me here; he highly approves what you wrote to me on metaphysics, and admires your penetration in comprehending its meaning so easily. It is true, indeed, that most metaphysicians involve themselves in inextricable difficulties, as well with regard to predestination as liberty. Corbinelli decides more boldly than any of them; but the most cautious bring themselves off with an *altitudo*, or else force their adversaries to silence as our Cardinal does. I have never met with more absurdities than in the 26th article of the last volume of the *Moral Essays*, in the discourse upon tempting God. When teachers are humble, when their morals are correct, and nothing is intended but to baffle false arguments, there is no great harm done, for if they would be silent, we should say nothing: but when they are obstinately bent upon establishing their maxims; when they translate St. Augustine, for fear we should be ignorant of his meaning; when they endeavour to promulgate the most rigid doctrines imaginable; and then conclude, like Father Bauni, lest they should lose their right of scolding; this puts me out of all patience, and I cannot avoid doing like Corbinelli. May I die if I do not prefer the Jesuits! they are,

at leaſt, conſiſtent and uniform in their doctrine, as well as in their morality. Our brethren make eloquent discourses, but draw absurd conclusions ; they are not sincere ; at laſt, you see, I have dipped into Escobar. You may easily perceive, my child, that I jeſt and divert myself.

I left Beaulieu with M. de la Garde's copyiſt ; he never loses sight of my original. It was not without great difficulty that I complied with M. de la Garde's requeſt : you will see what a daub it is. I hope the laſt touches will be better ; but yeſterday it looked shockingly. This is the effect of so earneſt a desire to have a copy of that beautiful portrait of Madame de Grignan, and which it would have been cruel in me to refuse. Well, I did not refuse ; but I rejoice that I never before met with so horrid a profanation of my daughter's face. This painter is a young man from Tournay, to whom M. de la Garde pays three guineas a month ; his intention, at first, was to employ him in painting screens, and now he is to do no less than copy Mignard. These projects are a little unreasonable : but silence ; for I have a great regard for the person in queſtion.

I wish, my dear child, that you had a tutor for your son ; it is a pity his mind should be left uncultivated. I doubt whether he is yet of an age to eat all sorts of food promiscuously ; we should examine whether children are ſtrong and robuſt, before we give them ſtrong meats ; otherwise we run the hazard of injuring their ſtomachs, which is of great consequence. My son ſtays behind to take leave of his friends ; he will then come to me here ; he muſt afterwards join the army, and after that he may go and drink the waters. An officer, named M. D , has lately been cashiered for absenting himself : I know the answer you will make, but this inſtance sufficiently shows the severity of military discipline. Adieu, my dear child ; be comforted for the loss of your son ; nobody is to blame concerning him. His death was occasioned by teething, and not by a defluxion upon the lungs : when children have not ſtrength sufficient to force out the teeth at a proper time, they are never able to bear the necessary motion to make them all come at once : I talk learnedly.

You know the answer of Sully's green bed to M. de Coulanges, made by Guillerague ; it is droll enough : Madame de Thianges repeated it to the King, who sings it ; it was said at first, that he had ruined himself by it ; but it is not true, it will perhaps make his fortune. If this discourse does not come from a green mind, it comes from a green head, which is the same, and the colour of the thing cannot be disputed.

LETTER CXIX

To the Same

Paris, Sunday evening, August 15, 1677.

I could never have thought, my child, that a day so long expected could have been so exactly foreseen ; the sixteenth, however, which we have been wishing for these two months, is at last just arrived. I shall set out with the worthy Abbé to-morrow at daybreak : we are not in very high spirits, but we have some entertaining books ; and as we shall not travel quite so fast as the stage, we shall have leisure to think of those we love by the way. A false report was current yesterday, that the siege of Charleroi was raised : everybody considers this as ominous, so ill an opinion has been conceived of our enemies ; this thought gives me pleasure, for I do not much like to think of a battle. My son has written to me twice ; the wound in his heel is increased by the jolting of the chaise. The daughter-in-law you propose to me, whose constitution may be capable of bearing the greatest fatigues, has a perfect resemblance to the beauteous Dulcinea : I fancy we can expect no other match, for we are shunned by everybody else ; I find, by the aspect of the planets, that we were not born to be happy.

You appear to me to be quite tired of the ladies of Montélimart. Ah ! why am I not with you to keep your apartment quiet, and give you time to breathe ? I see you are overwhelmed with the burden ; these are ill-judged connexions ; such company does not at all suit you : you should be left to your

amiable family ; all the members who compose it are now assembled. Would to God the *worthy* could be tempted to go there to visit the Archbishop : pray contrive that the Prelate may write to him at Vichy ; who knows what an effect it may produce ? For my own part, I shall not mention a syllable to him on the subject, as I well know the strong opposition he would certainly make to such a request from me : we must go quite a contrary way to work with him, to bring him to comply with our wishes ; this is the only way to make any impression.

As for you, Count, you cannot possibly have so strong a desire to see me at Grignan, as I have to embrace you there. In the name of God, impute not to me the act of barbarity we are about to commit, it really oppresses my heart to think of it ; believe there is nothing I more earnestly desire ; but I am bound to the good Abbé, who invents so many wretched arguments against the journey, that I perfectly despair of making any impression upon him.

I dined to-day with the coadjutor : he complains of the cruelty of the Abbé who it seems left him alone at Paris, *poor soul !* without friend, acquaintance, house, or the smallest knowledge of any place where he might hide his head. I have visited Madame de Vins, who most assuredly entertains a very high esteem for you ; she was here this morning with the Abbé Arnaud : I refused to comply with the request they made me, to leave them your picture to be copied at their house ; for the very idea of parting with it gives me so much pain, that I cannot possibly bear it at Vichy ; on my return, if I find I have collected sufficient strength to support the weight of such a trial, I will consent to it. I entreat you to be careful of your health, if you have any regard for me ; it is now so well confirmed, that, were it not on your account, I should give up all thoughts of my journey to Vichy. It is difficult to carry our imagination into futurity when we are under no sort of uneasiness ; but you wish it, and it is done. Madame de Coulanges has been my guide for the last two or three days ; she has given herself a great deal of trouble on my account ; indeed she has thought of nothing but me.

LETTER CXX

To the Same

Villeneuve-le-Roi, Wednesday, August 18, 1677.

Well, my child, are you satisfied at last? You see I am now on the road. I set out on Monday, when the town was full of a piece of news which had not been so much as suspected. I was extremely anxious to know whether we had not given battle for we have been undeceived as to the raising of the siege of Charleroi, which had been, we know not how, falsely reported. I therefore begged M. de Coulanges to send me word to Melun, where I was to sleep, what he learned from Madame de Louvois, relative to the affair: in short, I saw the servant arrive, who informed me that the siege of Charleroi was raised in good earnest, and that he had seen the letter M. de Louvois had written to his lady: so that, thank heaven, I can now pursue my journey in tranquillity; this is certainly a great satisfaction, as I shall experience none of the inquietudes which are the natural effects of war. What say you to this good-natured Prince of Orange? Would you not be apt to imagine, that his whole care is employed in rendering the waters of service to me, and turning our letters, written four years ago, into ridicule, in which we very gravely reasoned on an event that had not come to pass? We will take care he shall not catch us napping a third time.[1]

I am now going to proceed on my journey, in which I follow you step by step: I had some little qualms at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, on seeing a second time, the place where we wept so heartily together; the hostess appeared to me a good conversible sort of a personage: I questioned her very earnestly about the state of your health, the last time you were there; she told me you were very melancholy, very thin, and that M. de Grignan tried what he could to raise your spirits, and

[1] The action of the Prince of Orange was very ill seconded by the Spaniards.

prevail on you to eat something : so you see I guessed but too truly. She told me she heartily partook of my anxiety ; that she, too, had a daughter married at a great distance from her, and that on the day of their parting, they both fainted away. I fancied the daughter must be, at the lowest computation, as far as Lyons. I asked her, how she came to let her go so far from her ? She told me, it was for the sake of an advantageous match, with a very honest man, thank God ! I then asked the name of the place ; she told me it was at Paris, that he was a butcher near the Mazarin palace, and that he had the honour to serve M. de Maine, Madame de Montespan, and very often His Majesty : I leave you to meditate on the justness of the comparison, as well as the simplicity of my good hostess. I partook in her affliction, as she had done in mine. I have since travelled in the finest weather, through the most delightful country, and over the best roads in the world. You told me it was winter when you travelled this way ; it is now summer, and the finest season you can possibly imagine. I am everywhere inquiring after you, and have everywhere the satisfaction of receiving information ; if I had heard no news of you since you passed this way, I should have been very unhappy, for I hear of nothing but your thinness ; but I live in hopes the Princess Olympia will have made way for the Princess Cleopatra. The good Abbé is very careful of me ; though I think the complaisance, alacrity, and attention he shows in what relates to me, are properly to be charged to your account ; since his extreme attention in conducting me safely, is, as he tells me, from his great desire to oblige you ; I told him I would take care you should be informed of his assiduity. We are now reading a history of the Emperors of the East, written by a young Princess, daughter of the Emperor Alexis.[1]

It is extremely entertaining ; but be it known to you, we read it without any prejudice to Lucian : I had never,

[1] The Princess Anne Comnène wrote this history at the beginning of the twelfth century, which is in reality very interesting, and has been well translated by President Cousin. She gives a very different idea of the Crusades from what we have received from so many boastful panegyrics.

till now, seen any of his pieces, except four or five celebrated ones ; the reſt are in every reſpect equal to these : but what I prefer even to Lucian, is your letters ; I assure you, my regard for them is in no reſpect owing to my affection ; you may ask all your acquaintances : answer me, M. de Grignan, M. de la Garde, and M. l'Abbé ; is it not true, that nobody writes as she does ? I accordingly amuse myself with two or three I have brought with me. What you say of a certain lady deserves to be printed. However, I do not retract ; I have seen the ſtage-coach pass, and am more fully persuaded than ever, that it is impossible to be languishing in such a vehicle. Apropos, La B has diſtinguished herself by her cruel and inhuman conduct on the death of her mother[1] : she ought certainly to have lamented her, were it only from intereſted motives ; she is equally ungenerous and unnatural ; she has scandalized everybody ; she did nothing but chatter and brush her teeth, whilſt the poor woman was dying. I think I hear you exclaim at this. Ah, my child, how extremely opposite is your conduct ! I have had very serious thoughts on this subject. Madame de G had figured in high life, had made the fortune of some, and conſtituted the happiness and pleasure of others ; she had a hand in great affairs ; she enjoyed the confidence of two Miniſters (M. de Chavigny and M. Fouquet), to whose taſte she did real honour. She possessed great elevation of mind, had high views, and the art of employing a splendid fortune to the moſt noble purposes ; the loss of this she was unable to support : the disorder of her affairs soured her temper, and she was irritated by misfortune ; this had a wonderful influence on everything that related to her, and might possibly serve as a pretext for the coldness of her friends.[2] In this reſpect her behaviour was quite opposite to that of M. Fouquet, who, though intoxicated with his exaltation,

[1] Madame de Guénégaud.

[2] It has been seen elsewhere, that her husband, Secretary of State, had been ſtripped of the greateſt part of his fortune by the Chamber of Juſtice, that Colbert eſtabliſhed againſt the financiers. Madame de Guénégaud was of the family of Choiseul. She intereſted herself warmly according to the spirit of the times in the civil wars, and had considerable influence. She negotiated the return of the great Condé, his family and partisans, to France.

supported his disgrace most heroically : I have always been struck with the comparison. These are the reflections of Villeneuve-le-Roi : you may easily judge there would have been no leisure for such meditations, but for the convenience of sitting entirely at my ease in my own carriage. I add to these, that I think the world is too easily consoled at the death of a person whose good qualities certainly very far exceeded her bad ones.

Joigny, Wednesday evening.

We have had the finest ride imaginable since dinner. This is really a beautiful country, and a delightful little estate : though it has been let for no more than twenty thousand crowns since the late bad times, it was formerly rented at a much higher sum. There is only one life upon it, before it will come into your possession : this will be a lucky throw. How are you ? do you begin to grow plump ? do you sleep well ? Count, you never say a word about my daughter ; does your pen refuse to set down anything on this subject ? Let me hear how your music goes on ; for that wife of yours begins, methinks, to play the learned and fine lady, and I am sometimes inclined to think she is no great admirer of your harmony. My advice to you is not to trouble yourself any more about Arnoux. His views are by no means directed towards your convenience at Grignan. He is young, gets a great deal of money, and will get still more ; he even aspires to be admitted into the King's chapel. Do as I do, my dear Count, when I find people begin to be indifferent about me ; which is, to adopt the resolution from that moment, to be equally indifferent about them ; this produces the happiest consequences imaginable. I supped the other evening with the Marchioness d'Huxelles, where I found Rouville, who spoke to me of you so seriously, and with so much esteem and respect, that I really think he will not live long. I have an infinity of compliments besides, from your St. Gérans, your de Vins, etc. ; in short, enough to make up the number to which you want, as they say, to augment them, on account of the discovery

you happened to make the other day at Aix. I return to you, my dear child ; I grow uneasy at not hearing from you, and if I have no letter to-morrow, I shall really be grieved. I hope you will send me word whether I have guessed rightly in regard to the false heart you are unwilling to reckon upon.

Auxerre, Thursday at noon.

We are just arrived, after a tolerably hot journey. We saw the castle of Seignelai, as we passed, and bestowed our blessing on it, so that we are in hope it will thrive. But we had the misfortune not to lodge in the same place where you lodged. We were badly accommodated, having contented ourselves with following the old beaten track. I have sent to the post office, to know whether there is any letter for me ; the postmaster it seems was out of the way, and I await his return. His wife told us she had lodged the Countess de Grignan as she passed that way, and that she looked rather thin ; that this was on a Friday and that they had, notwithstanding, set the pot on the fire ; but that the Count ate nothing but a few strawberries. I am quite vexed to have put up where there is such wretched accommodations ; and the more so, as we are to pass the remainder of the day here, to rest our horses. To-morrow we may expect to reach Epoisses, where M. de Guitant will receive us with a hearty welcome. I am sorry I shall not have the pleasure of meeting his lady there, who is a woman of very good sense, and of easy manners. She stays behind, on account of a lawsuit, which has so hastened her reckoning, that she has sent as far as this place for her midwife, who is to deliver her in the very heart of Paris : it is impossible to pay a greater compliment to the force of habit. I am wholly yours, my dearest ; I shall never be prevailed upon to believe it can possibly be for my advantage to be absent from you ; I did not think you could have been persuaded into this ridiculous notion ; but you have written me such things on this head as I shall never forget. We shall be very much to be pitied when your affairs oblige you to come and see me once more.

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